

QUITS.

Bushnell, William H

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QUITS.

BY WILLIAM H. BUSHNELL.

"If we don't have some fun with these finical city gentlemen, I'll give up," said Nell Bartlett to her cousin, as they were preparing to retire. "They think just because they live in a great Babel that they know it all and we nothing. The fact is, Blanche, I invited you here on purpose. There'll be lots of picnics, and wood-wanderings, and boating, and horseback-riding, and all that sort of thing. And they'll make good gallants, even if they are soft enough to believe that we swallow all their brainless flatteries as effectually as a great spider does a fly."

"Do you not judge them harshly, Nell? You know you have seen but very little of them as yet."

"O, I judge from others that have visited the neighborhood, and of all things I detest 'Miss Nancy' men who believe girls are simply playthings—and fools!"

"Be careful!" answered her more reticent cousin Blanche Goodwin. "Suppose they should overhear you?"

"Well, listeners—you know the rest. But there is no fear of that. The gentlemen have gone down to visit the lake, 'by the sweet silver light of the moon,' get

their thin boots wet, and more than likely take cold, for mother and your humble servant to doctor with sage, boneset and honey."

"Be still, Nell. I am certain I scent the smoke of a cigar."

"Nothing quite so poetical, I'll be bound. More likely it is old Patrick with his pipe. He always has to visit 'the stock' about this time, and never is without his 'dhu-deen.' I expect some night he will burn us out of house and home."

The conversation was continued at length. Girl-friends have always so much to talk about and so many secrets (?) to tell. The merits of the gentlemen in question were discussed with as much of deliberation and earnestness as if they had been weighty affairs of state.

But they were mistaken about not being overheard, in part, at least. Boyd Layton had not gone with his friend to visit the lake, and it was the perfume of his cigar that had been wafted to the delicate nostrils of the fair cousins. True, his ears had caught only the opening of the conversation. But that was enough to put him upon his guard; and when Charley Palmer returned he told him of it, adding, with a laugh:

"These girls—beautiful ones, I must confess, especially Miss Nell, with her long soft black hair, brilliant eyes, exquisite complexion, voice like a bluebird, and laugh like the fairy-bells of song."

"I incline to the other—Miss Blanche. She is far more near to my ideal of beauty. Granting all you say of the other, my taste runs to the blue eyes and golden hair" of the more *spirituelle* cousin. However, as they will never be more to us than passing friends and pleasant summer companions, there is no need of discussion."

"Well, as I was about to say, these young ladies have made up their minds that we are fair game, and will no doubt endeavor to play all sorts of tricks upon us. So we must be upon our guard, and match them as far as difference in sex will permit. Anyway, it will contribute to make the summer pass lively, and will be harmless amusement."

"I am sorry a passage of wits, if not of arms, is to be inaugurated, but glad of the presence of our would-be-tormentors. It would have been dull without, for one tires of babbling brooks, and trees, and

fishing. I made up my mind long ago that if I were a painter I would never draw a landscape without introducing a female figure with—"

"Dancing blue eyes and golden hair, and all that sort of thing!" laughed his friend.

"Perhaps. But, seriously, Blanche Goodwin would not make a bad model, according to my mind."

"And dashing Nell Bartlett, according to mine, you would insinuate."

The young men had sought a retired place in the country to pass the summer months and rest from their labors. Both had studied hard—received diplomas, and been admitted—Boyd Layton as a lawyer, and Charles Palmer as a physician, and when autumn came would enter into practice. They had met the "girls," as good motherly Dame Bartlett called her daughter and niece, at the supper-table, and been impressed with their beauty and grace. They, too, had graduated and received diplomas to practice, though in a very different sphere of life (would to Heaven women would stick to it), as wives and mothers—going through first a preparatory course of Cupid!

It was no necessity that had led Farmer Bartlett to take the young men as boarders. His acres were broad, fertile, and paid for, and he had some thousands in bank. But all his children save Nell had "gone on before," and the house was lonely. So he acceded to the request of old friends and took "the boys" in for a season.

For some days all was quiet and decorous between the parties. As she saw more of their boarders, Nell began to question the propriety of "running rigs" on them, and to change her opinion as to their belonging to the class with which she had at first allied them. But she was too fond of fun to give it up without a struggle, and more than once the spirit of mischief prompted her. Yet something occurred that forced her to wait a better opportunity; and the whisperings of her cousin made her more cautious than she would otherwise have been. Blanche was certain the men had got some inkling of what was going on. There was something in their manner, in the way of watching, that convinced her of this; and at length even the volatile Nell was impressed with

the policy of lulling any suspicion they might have entertained.

And so the most critical, fault-finding and savagely moral old spinster could have found no flaw so far as their behaviour was concerned, as they tramped the woods, picnicked by some shady pool, took rides upon horseback, floated over the glassy lake, or dropped a line to the fishes, hoping they would "mark and inwardly digest" to their undoing.

"Where to-day, children?" asked Mrs. Bartlett, as they sat gossiping around the breakfast-table, after having finished the meal. By the term "children" she included the quartet of young folks.

"We are at the service of the ladies," responded Layton, gallantly.

"And that means, Nell," interlarded her father, laughingly, "that you are expected to suggest some wild-goose chase to occupy the day."

"I don't think it fair," she answered, pretending to pout, and doing it with wonderful arch sauciness, "that the onus as well as the blame of all these expeditions should come upon my poor shoulders."

"They couldn't come upon a prettier pair, Nell!"

Boyd Layton was of the same opinion as the old gentleman, and expressed it with his eyes, even if he did not dare to do so with his tongue.

"You'd completely spoil me, father, if I'd let you!" she answered, with becoming blushes.

"No, I leave that to your husband!" And laughing heartily, he betook himself to the overseeing of the farm work.

"Well," suggested the mother, to cover the confusion of her daughter, and turn the conversation into another channel, "I don't suppose you intend to sit moping around the house all day—you four? It is altogether too pleasant, and there'll be plenty of storms to keep you in doors."

"But I don't know where to go, mother. We have visited all the places of interest I can think of."

"Suppose you try the glen. I don't think you have been there."

The suggestion was carried out; the day passed pleasantly; the return home was late, about the going down of the sun, when both of the gentlemen started suddenly, and exclaimed in a breath:

"Good heavens! what a terrible sight!"

Blanche turned pale, and clung to her cousin, but Nell did not appear in the least alarmed.

"It is only a poor crazed woman," she said, "who lives in the vicinity, and has watchers."

"Is she dangerous?" questioned Layton, as he and his friend placed themselves so as to defend their fair companions in case there should be need so to do.

"Not ordinarily, I believe, though I have heard that when her temper was aroused, or when she was suddenly awakened from sound slumber, she was spitefully vindictive."

"Dangerous or not," continued Layton, "I should not care to meet her alone in the dark, to enter the room in which she was confined, or even one of which she was a temporary occupant."

"You seem to have a particular horror of one crazed, Mr. Layton."

"Yes, and it is a fear I could never account for, save that I was terribly frightened by a lunatic woman when very young; that must have given a coloring to my life."

"Very likely. How is it with you, Mr. Palmer?"

"I must confess to something of the same dread as my friend. Even a rabid dog or poisonous serpent has not so much terror for me."

"Strange. But see, she is turning away from the road."

"Does she ever visit your house?" questioned Blanche; and well named so at that particular time, for her soft cheeks could boast of no roses.

"She used to do so frequently, but of late she seldom comes. In fact, I do not remember to have seen her before this summer."

"And I pray Heaven I may never do so, or any of her sorely-afflicted brothers and sisters, again," replied Layton, with a shadow of aversion, even if not actual fear, that he did not attempt to conceal.

The woman was indeed an object of deep commiseration, if not dread. She was tall, gaunt, with long dark hair hanging in tangled locks low down upon her shoulders; with eyes that revealed fitful fires, and surrounded by livid circles; with sunken cheeks; a pinched mouth and nose; and clad in faded and scanty garments—one that, seen even for a brief space of time, would not soon be forgotten.

But she passed along quickly, after giving them a broad stare, and disappeared in the direction (as Nell said) of her own home. And yet (though she evidently had no such foolish fears as were entertained by her companions) the first question she asked upon entering the house was:

"Has crazy Jane Mathews been here to-day, mother?"

"Yes, poor thing, and she appeared to be nearly starved. Did you meet her?"

"For a moment, upon the hill road."

"I am glad of it, for then she will go home. It always makes me nervous when I know she is wandering, for she has such a way of stealing into houses, and taking possession of rooms."

Nell quickly turned the subject of conversation, left Blanche and her father to entertain their guests, while she assisted her mother; was absent for an hour; returned, and appeared more than ordinarily lively, sang and played the piano until late, and when parting with the gentlemen, added to her smiling good-night:

"I trust the unfortunate being we chanced to meet to-day will not visit you in dreams."

"Heaven forbid!" answered Layton; "and I am sure the angels of our dreams will have sweeter faces. Ay, Charley?"

Both of the girls understood him, and vanished before old and jolly Mr. Bartlett could pour in a broadside that was certain to make the faces of all scarlet.

Layton and Palmer sought their own room. The night was beautiful, and, having been deprived of their customary smoke, they sat by the open window, lighted cigars, and discussed their fair companions in very much the same style that they were being discussed. But at length even *Flor de Cubanos* and ideal love-dreams lost their charms, and they began to prepare for the actual ones to which their long tramp would give the greatest zest.

The solitary candle was lighted, and they were about to disrobe, when Boyd sprang back with an exclamation of terror, and whispered with pale lips:

"By heavens! the crazy woman!"

"Pshaw!" answered Palmer, half vexed to have his thoughts of the lovely Blanche thus broken in upon. "Pshaw, Boyd! what are you talking about?"

"Look for yourself."

Palmer, more cool than his friend, thought of the girls, and was inclined to believe it a trick. He walked nearer to the bed, made a more minute examination, and retreated again. There was no denying the fact. The miserably afflicted woman was lying there, covered to her shoulders, and they could see her shiver as if in pain. The dress, old and tattered, appeared to be the same, and there was not, could not be any doubt about the long dark hair. It swept low down upon the neck in just the same fashion, though now part of it hung over and concealed the pallid face and burning eyes.

"There is no doubt," answered Palmer "She has stolen in here from the night air while we were below."

"And what in the name of heaven shall we do?" questioned Boyd. "If it was a man, we could grapple with him. Now it is impossible. See! she stirs. What if she should awaken and find herself alone with us!"

Very certain were they that the woman was beginning to stir—was moving, and acting on the impulse of the moment, they dashed out into the hall and called loudly for Mr. Bartlett.

"What on earth is the matter?" he asked, rubbing his sleepy eyes. "Is it thieves, or fire?"

"The crazy woman is in our room—in my bed!"

"Shoo! You don't say so?"

"It is true. Just come and see."

The disturbance aroused the old lady and the girls, and soon they were all in the hall, talking in hurried yet careful whispers. Nell was the only one calm, and suggested that she should be awakened and removed. But who was to do it? Foolish terror had taken possession of all. They crowded on tiptoe and with hurried voices into the room, and old man Bartlett almost swore:

"By hooky! it is she, sure enough."

"And you had better let her alone," suggested his wife.

"And be murdered or burned alive?" cried Blanche.

"I believe Mrs. Bartlett is right," said Layton. "Charley and I will remain in the hall, and keep watch until morning."

"If I only had another spare room!" sighed Mrs. Bartlett.

Nell drew nearer the bed. She was not

so much unnerved by fear as the rest. She bent over the sleeper for a moment, and then said to Layton:

"If you and Mr. Palmer will assist me, we can carry her out, and I think without awakening her, poor thing."

There was no one willing to second her suggestion, and after a little time, she continued, "Then I must do it alone."

"For the love of Heaven, don't touch her!" exclaimed Layton.

Nell threw back the covering, lifted a cunningly-constructed lay figure, from the head of which dropped switches and false curls, and dashed out of the room, laughing until the very rafters rang.

The rest stood looking at each other in the most foolish manner possible for an instant, and then the young men were suddenly left to themselves.

"Sold!" whistled Palmer.

"And I wouldn't have been so frightened for anything," returned Layton. "Whew! what asses we have made of ourselves. By Jove! Miss Nell carried it out well, and carried off all the honors. I have half a mind to run away, rather than endure the battery of her laughing eyes."

"Better remain and get even."

"If we can?"

The little episode in their quiet lives afforded a topic for amusement for some time; and the weeks slipped away without the young men gaining an opportunity to in the least get even. The girls were constantly upon the watch, suspected every movement, and were as keen-witted as their opposers.

Various plans were tried, only to fail. The delicacy due to ladies forbade many things that could have been done with impunity towards those of their own sex—a delicacy and warmth of feeling that grew stronger every day toward their fair tormentors, for they had ascertained that the quiet Blanche was not an innocent party in the fooling they had received.

The frost began to touch the trees with its unseen fingers, and the leaves changed to hues that rivalled the sunset glories. The time when the gentlemen should have returned to city life and put on the harness of business had passed, but no heed was given to it. The solemn autumn—or something else—had made them strangely oblivious of time, and caused a change to come over the spirit of their dreams.

The quartet broke into couples. Layton and Nell, and Palmer and Blanche, wandered away from each other. The faces, eyes and words of the men became more earnest, and the lips and cheeks of the beautiful girls glowed a deeper carnation. Love was becoming more powerful than all other feelings, but yet the unsettled account between them gave the girls the advantage, and it often arose in their minds.

One evening their wanderings had led them further away from home than usual, and just as the sun was casting its farewell shadows, they paused to rest upon the brow of a hill that overlooked the home of Nell. Seated beneath a wide-spreading chestnut, they were conversing gayly (with that undercurrent of eyes that at such times is more eloquent than words), when suddenly something coiled around the neck of Nell, and gave a sharp puncture in the soft flesh.

"Snake!" exclaimed Layton, springing to his feet.

"O heavens! a snake!" screamed Nell.

Bursting through all the restraints of girlish modesty, she threw herself, half fainting, upon the breast of Layton, while Blanche lay trembling within the sheltering arms of Palmer.

The clinging serpent was torn away, Layton pressed his lips to the wound to suck the poison, and each of the men half carried their terrified charges homeward, soothing them with the fondest of words, and each feeling how very dear the other had become to him.

Supper finished, the story was told with many Ohs! and ahs! from good Dame Bartlett, while her husband asked, with far less of interest than one could have deemed possible:

"What kind of a snake was it, Mr. Layton? I didn't think there were any dangerous ones about here."

"It might be called a constrictor, I presume, and thinking you and your good wife might be curious in the matter, I brought it home with me."

He drew from his pocket a piece of grape vine, sharpened at one end, and continued:

"About as dangerous as the crazy woman, is it not, Miss Nell?"

"Anyhow, Mr. Layton was obliged to suck the poison from the terrible wound!" said Blanche, amid roars of laughter.

"And," put in the old man, "I suppose it made you mad because you didn't get the same kind of a bite and remedy!"

"Hush! and come along with me. I want you," said his wife, and dragged him away.

Dim lights might have been seen burning to a late hour that night in the farmhouse, and four hearts beat happily, and four pairs of lips whispered the sweetest words of earth, and gave the sweetest kisses.

At the morrow's breakfast the jolly old man rated them for sitting up so late, and asked if the matter of the crazy woman and the snake had been settled.

"Yes, father," replied Nell, looking archly at her lover, and bathed in blushes, "we have agreed to call it quits."

"Better *double* and quits?" he roared; and was promptly driven out of the room by the girls, for their engagement was too recent and too holy a subject to be jested about.

RIGHT OR WRONG?

BY ADA L. FLETCHER.

It was a pleasant little room, though a humble one, with its cheap matting covering the floor, the light cane-bottomed chairs, a few pictures on the wall, pleasant suggestive pictures, not mere paintings, a set of swinging shelves with books, and a bracket or two with a vase of bright flowers; with the spring breeze coming in through the open window, lifting the white curtain, and toying caressingly with a stray curl that lay on Agatha Verne's white forehead. Hers was not a beautiful face, but a very pleasant one to look at, with its clear pure complexion, without a shade of color in the cheeks; the dark auburn hair put back in a careless fashion of its own; the firm but very sensitive mouth, that showed her noble unselfish nature as clearly as did the large earnest gray eyes, now bent so closely over her work, and hidden by the long dark lashes. She was busy—very busy. It was Saturday, and the sun was almost down. The work in hand was to be called for at dark, and paid for, too, she hoped. Else where was to-morrow's dinner, with its little luxuries for her sister, to come from? And the nimble fingers fairly flew as the light waned.

"Florence," she said, presently, looking toward a sofa just across the little room, "could you not help me a little now, dear? Annie Walton must have her dress to wear to church to-morrow, you know."

The little figure on the sofa struggled faintly into a sitting posture, the white hands put the brown curls back from her face, then were pressed closely on her temples, while a voice that would have been musical if it had not been fretful, replied:

"O Agatha! I don't see how you can ask me when you know my head aches so! That horrid machine has almost killed me this day; and just as I was getting rested from the noise, you must ask me to sew on Annie Walton's dress. O dear! O dear!"

There was an undertone of real pain in this querulous complaining, and Agatha looked up quickly, then crossed the room, and put her petted sister's head gently back on its pillow.

"Dear child, I did not know your head

ached. Lie down again, and let me bathe it with some fresh spring water, and it will get better."

"I don't want to lie down now," said the girl, discontentedly. "If you had let me alone when I was down, it would have got better without bathing."

"Well then, Floy," said her sister, patiently, "wouldn't a little walk help you? There's Auntie Grey's cap you might carry home for me."

"Of course you must have some motive even in wanting me to walk. I won't go!"

Agatha did not answer, but went quietly back to her work, which she adjusted to the sewing-machine. She was used to such scenes. For the last five years her life had been a succession of them. As her foot touched the pedal, Florence spoke again, quickly and sharply:

"O Agatha! you surely are not going to start that machine again, when I just told you how it hurt my head? You are cruel—cruel!" Then came a burst of sobs and tears.

For a moment Agatha's features quivered with pain at the cruel injustice of the speech, and she was silent. Then she said, still tenderly and gently, as she went to the sofa again and took the brown head in her lap:

"Poor little girl! I am so sorry about your head, but you know I must work, or we shall suffer. Come, be a good girl now. Put on your hat, and get away from the noise of the machine."

Florence shook her head and sobbed on, until suddenly there came a whirr of buggy wheels to the door, and a pleasant manly voice called out:

"Come, girls! I can't leave my horses, but I want you both to try them with me. Be in a hurry!"

In an instant the tears and sobs were forgotten, the drooping figure bounded from the sofa as if there was no such thing in the world as a headache, and Florence Verne ran eagerly to the door.

"I'll be ready in a moment, doctor!" she cried; and then whirled back into the room.

"Why don't you get ready, Aggie?" she said, impatiently.

"Because, you know, I cannot go, Floy," she answered, with a faint smile. "I cannot take Annie's dress with me."

"Well," said Floy, as she went into the other room, "you'll miss a great treat, that's all."

Ah, did not Agatha know that without any reminding? She knew what a ride with Herbert Lawrence that bright May evening would be to her far better than did Floy, and as she was but a girl, with a girl's heart yet, in spite of all her staidness of demeanor, it is no wonder a bitter tear of disappointment rolled down the pale cheek. She made Auntie Grey's cap up into a small package, and walked down to the gate, where the black horses were champing their bits and stamping their dainty feet. She came so quietly Herbert did not hear her until she stood close beside him. Then he looked down at her with a smile that transfigured his whole face, and took both the tired hands in his with an indescribable tenderness.

"Are you ready, Aggie darling?" he said, the last word almost under his breath.

"I am not going, Herbert," she said, quietly, though there was a suspicious tremble about the mouth, and the eyes that met his were just a little clouded. "I have work that *must* be finished, but I am grateful to you just the same, for it will do Floy so much good."

"Not more than it would you, my poor tired darling. Agatha—" And the words trembled on his lips that would have revealed to her even more plainly than his words and actions in the past had already done, his earnest love for her; but just then Floy came flying down the walk, her eyes brilliant with expectant pleasure. Then the package must be given to Herbert with directions, and Agatha must go back to get the shawl to put about her careless darling. Then the black horses danced away with them, and Agatha went back to the house with a glad song in her heart that even the thought of her sister's unkindness could not hush. Herbert loved her, and she loved him with all the depths of her tender earnest nature. No wonder there was a smile upon her lip as the noisy machine put the last stitches in Annie Walton's dress, and she could give that

very unpleasant young lady so cheery and pleasant a greeting that she wondered "what could make that Verne girl so happy," as she took herself and her dress home.

Agatha was sitting in the darkness that was light, to her, when Floy came home. The girl was even more restless than usual.

"Why do you sit in the dark, Aggie?" she said. Then, as her sister made a movement to light the lamp, "No, I don't want a light. O dear! I don't know what I *do* want."

"I can readily believe that, little girl," laughed Agatha.

"Yes, I do! O yes I do!" said Florence, throwing herself on the floor beside her sister. "O Aggie! I want him to love me. I must talk to somebody about it, or I shall go crazy; and you do love me, I believe, though you do treat me so badly sometimes. He treats me so strangely, Aggie! Humoring and petting me just as if I were a little child, or else not noticing me at all. Do you think he can love me, sister? If he should not, and should love some one else, I should die, Aggie! I know I should die!" moaned the child, burying her face in her sister's lap.

Agatha felt in that instant as if an icy hand had clutched her heart, stilling its throbblings forever. But with the self-control so wonderful in one so young, she forced herself to ask the question whose answer she knew so well:

"Of whom are you speaking, little sister?"

"Whom?" cried Floy, starting to her feet. "What man is there in all the world to me but Herbert Lawrence?"

Then she sank down on the floor again in the sweet shame of her love and its confession.

Agatha sat very still for a while, gathering all her energies to meet this new trouble that had fallen upon her—lifting her heart in prayer to God for strength for the sacrifice she knew she must make. Ever since Floy's mother had died, five years before, leaving her to her step-daughter's care, Agatha's life had been one long sacrifice. Her mother's relations had offered her wealth and a luxurious home if she would but leave the little girl and come to them; but because the child had no other relatives or friends in all the world, Agatha would not desert her, but at eighteen years

of age turned away from all the pleasures of life, and took up the hard life of labor and poverty that had been hers ever since. Having "put her hand to the plow," she did not once turn back; and though this one great trial was not half she had to bear, because Floy's selfishness was so verily a part of her nature that it could not be eradicated, but wounded her sister's heart a thousand times a day, she went on in her martyrdom—as real a martyr as any the world acknowledges. But now this was almost more than she could bear. She felt she must be alone for thought and prayer, and stooping, kissed her sister's cheek, after this long silence between them, whispering:

"Come, little sister, and go to bed now. If Herbert does not love you now, I am sure he will in time."

But Floy did not want to go to bed.

"You are selfish, Aggie," she said; "you do not sympathize with me at all. I want to talk to you."

And Agatha must sit there and listen to it all, and though her brain reeled and her heart grew sick within her, no word escaped the white lips to betray her. At last Florence herself grew weary and retired, and when she was asleep, and Agatha knew herself to be alone, she knelt beside her bed, and as God sent tears to her relief, the storm of sorrow shook the slender form as a reed is swayed in the wind. The night was passed in this way—morning found her still kneeling there. She was enabled to go about her duties cheerfully as ever next day, until evening came again, when Florence had been carried off by a crowd of girls to the evening service at the little church, and she sat alone, enjoying the Sabbath stillness that gave her time for thought. She had lain her head upon the window, looking with great mournful eyes into the sky, watching the stars come out one by one, thinking as many another suffering soul has done, "O, indifference of Nature to the fact of human pain!" when suddenly a shadow came between her and the stars, and she knew that Herbert was there waiting to come in. She opened the door for him like one walking in her sleep, but he hardly waited for that before he had her hands in his again, and was telling her over and over how he loved her—how he would cherish and protect her if she would be his wife. She had expected this—had

schooled herself to bear it, and had her answer ready; but how hard it was, let the heart of every woman who reads this answer for itself.

"Herbert, I cannot!" was all she could say, turning her face away from him, that he might not read the love and anguish written there. She could not bring her lips to utter a falsehood, to say she did not love him, so her only answer must be, "I cannot be your wife." He drew her to a seat, and folding his arms, stood looking at her as if to compel an answer.

"But, Agatha, why can you not be my wife? Answer! It is my right to know. You have not said you do not love me."

The gray eyes were full of pleading now.

"Be merciful, Herbert, and do not ask me! Do you not see my heart is breaking?"

It was long before he was merciful and left her alone in the moonlight, and then with a bitter farewell on his lips—farewell forever. How is it hearts can bear so much and yet live on—so long, so long? There was no trace of this struggle in our pale martyr's face when she kissed her little sister good-night, but long after Floy was asleep and smiling in her dreams, she lay beside her with wide open tearless eyes, burying her dead love.

Fate came to her aid next morning in the shape of a letter from her mother's sister, telling her she was ill, perhaps dying, with no one but strangers and servants about her, and asking her for her dead mother's sake to come to her a while. Then Floy danced in with tidings of an invitation for her from one of her school friends to spend the summer months with her. So Agatha's resolution was taken. The sisters went their several ways, and Herbert Lawrence found this letter lying on his table:

"HERBERT, — Although you said we could not be friends, I am going to trust you as a friend—as I would no one else in all the world. I am obliged to go to my aunt for a few weeks, and my sister will be at Mrs. Mars's, a few miles out of town. Herbert, may I leave her in your care? And will you forgive me, and not think me unwomanly, if I tell you that though I cannot be your wife, there is one whom I have often heard you say you loved dearly, who loves you with all her ardent nature, and whose life you only can make happy. Forgive me, and may God forever bless you!"

Then a week later in the darkened sick-room, Agatha read the answer:

"MY SISTER AGATHA,—I understand all now, and will help you. May God requite you?" And it was not many weeks after, that the letter she had been looking for from Florence came, running over with happiness: "Herbert loved her. Herbert had asked her to be his wife, and they were to be married early in the fall. Would Agatha hurry home to help her get ready?"

With loving earnest zeal Agatha did help her, tender of her welfare to the very last, meeting Herbert with a patient smile it made his heart ache to see. Though he did love Floy, who, in spite of her selfishness had many lovely winning ways, and meant to make her life as happy as Agatha wished it, he *knew* he should never love any one as he loved *her*. He was one of a few who could have understood Agatha, and he saw through all this plainly now, and though it only made him love her more, he determined that since she did not shrink from the sacrifice he would not. But he must go away he knew—where he should not see her face for years. So "these two were wed;" and Agatha stood on the doorstep in the early morning watching the carriage that bore them away with solemn tearless eyes, then went back to duty and her aunt.

Ten years later we find Agatha alone in one of the luxurious rooms of her aunt's elegant house, now her own, as we know by her mourning robes. Only a few days has the poor invalid been at rest—only a little while has Agatha's weary work been over. Time has made no great changes in the pleasant face we knew ten years ago. A little paler, perhaps, the mouth a little sadder in its earnestness, but she does not look to be thirty-three, as she is to-day. The years have not been happy ones nor yet unhappy, for she has been at work—the kind of work that suits her best, self-sacrifice, self-abnegation. Surely now she will rest. A letter lies in her lap which she has evidently read many times, and now reads again.

"OUR DEAR SISTER AGATHA,—It seems very selfish in us to write you this way in the midst of your own grief for your aunt, and when you must be needing rest and peace so much. But O Agatha, if you

could come to us a while! You can have no idea how badly we need you. Floy's health is so bad that she is absolutely unfit for anything. Just the old nervousness and headache, Aggie. Nothing more serious, I think. And our *five* children are running wild! I have a large practice, and am kept so busy night and day that I can do nothing for them. Although I know how badly you are needed, better than any one, perhaps, I would not write for you now, only Florence keeps calling for you, and 'will not be comforted because you are not'—here."

Agatha's day for much weeping was over, but as she read this large tears gathered in her eyes and fell upon the paper, for the letter told her far more than it would a stranger. She knew her sister—knew just what this "old nervousness and headache" was, and *felt* what Herbert's life must be. Then in these long ten years she had had time for thought, and the thought that she had wronged Herbert deeply, and in her zeal for her sister's happiness had sacrificed his as well as her own, had at times driven her almost wild. She could not decide, nor can we. We leave it, as did Agatha, to God. But she could not hesitate an instant over this appeal. She had seen neither Florence nor Herbert in all these years, but they needed her now, and it was her duty to go to them, though, martyr-like, every step of the path should be on coals of living fire. For she had never once tried to argue herself into the belief that her love for Herbert was dead. She knew that she loved him as deeply as she did on the day she gave him up, and while humbling herself in the dust as the vilest of sinners, and not daring to hope for heaven because of it, she could not help it. And because she knew this, she also knew that her life would be a miserable one in Herbert's house—so near to him and yet so far away. But she felt safe, because, although she thought herself a sinner, the angels in heaven were not purer than she in thought and deed. So she would go, although her physician told her she was not strong enough. Her heart had been affected for years, he said, and any sudden excitement would be fatal, though she might live to be an old woman, quietly. But as to that she thought she would be given strength "sufficient unto her day," and would at last die with

"harness on." She placed her affairs in the hands of a skillful lawyer—taking care to make her will, giving her all to the children of Herbert and Florence, secure, then started for the West with a family with whom she was acquainted.

Herbert met her at the depot of the busy bustling Texas town—"city" it aspired to be—with the greeting a brother gives a sister he has not seen for years, and took her to his home; and there she was the ministering angel for five years more, bringing beautiful order out of the chaos that had reigned there—making dutiful loving children of the five little savages she found there, shaming Florence into something like a wife and mother, though self ruled her every action still, as was always too plain to the sometimes-abused, always-neglected, husband. Agatha made a home of what had been *literally* a "howling wilderness" to Herbert, and did it all so quietly that a stranger would never have guessed her influence. Florence sighed to her husband, that "no one had ever cared for her like Aggie did"—the children almost worshipped their gentle aunt, who, while she loved them, governed them, and Herbert, seeing it *all*, felt his heart swell and ache within him, though he gave no sign. Very few words ever passed between the two, but the grave sweet smile, never given to any one else, repaid Agatha for all. Herbert worked hard, too hard, Agatha often told him when he came home utterly worn out, drenched with rain or shivering with cold, but he always shook his head, saying, "*I cannot work too hard!*" Verily, it seemed that Florence thought so, for whenever he came into her room, no matter how weary he looked and felt, nobody could do anything for her but him, and her tongue was ever ready with reproaches. "You do not love me. You do not sympathize with me!" was always the cry. O, how hard this was for Agatha to bear. She would go to her room after a scene like this, and fall upon her knees in an agony of prayer for God to forgive her for having brought all this misery on the man she loved. But she would ask, if God did forgive her, could Herbert? She knew she had not long to live, the paroxysms of pain about her heart grew more frequent and more alarming, but she thought she could not die in peace unless he pardoned her.

Time went on, as we have said, until

Agatha had been in Herbert's home five years. It was the anniversary of her coming, and the children had prepared a little feast in her honor, only waiting for their father, to come and enjoy it. They were all in the parlor waiting, listening through the heavy dashing of the rain for his footsteps. Agatha's namesake, the oldest child, a quiet grave little maiden of fourteen, her father's favorite, and the one upon whom Agatha depended to take her place when she was gone, had got her father's chair, dressing-gown and slippers ready, when they heard his step on the pavements.

"Papa walks so slow," said Aggie, impatiently, "I'm going to meet him—No, Bertie, you mustn't come, or Ella, either."

They heard her say, "Why, papa?" as she opened the door—then there was a heavy fall, and then the child's frightened screams rang through the house.

Agatha was the first to reach Herbert's side, her face as white as his, and calm as death. With the help of a servant, whom she then sent for a physician, she lifted him to a couch. Then she sent all the children, with the exception of Aggie, who now emulated her aunt's composure, to the nursery. The two labored with him, until they were rewarded by the signs of returning consciousness even before the physician came. Aggie went then to quiet her mother who was almost frantic, and Agatha alone bent over the motionless form listening for the labored breath, when suddenly the dark eyes she had loved so well opened and looked clearly into hers. He smiled—his grave sweet smile, and his lips moved. Agatha bent lower, holding her breath that she might hear.

"Agatha," the pale lips whispered—"in heaven—there is—no marrying—or giving—in marriage—" Then the eyes closed and all was still again; they were the last conscious words Herbert Lawrence ever spoke. For a week he tossed upon his bed in a burning fever, and then the end came—suddenly as in all such cases. Agatha closed the glazing eyes without a single tear, and folded the hands that had grown so weary in their strife with the world, over the heart that ached and suffered no longer, with her own heart happier than it had been for years. Was it strange? Herbert had forgiven her—she knew from the earnest Christian life, that his spirit was at rest, and knew, too, that death would soon sum-

mon her also. Surely, her strength during that awful week had been something supernatural, for of course everything had fallen upon her. Florence had been really ill, and, selfish to the last, would call Agatha from her husband's room to reproach her with not "sympathizing with her in this awful trouble." Agatha bore it all as of old, and only little Aggie knew how often her aunt's hand was pressed to her side while her face showed her keen pain.

Late in the evening of the day before they were to bury Herbert, she had stolen away to her own room for a little while, and was sitting there in her stony tearless silence, thinking of the past and planning for the future—how she would take Florence and her children home to New York with her, to care for them while she lived, and provide for them when she should be taken away from them, when little Aggie's timid rap came on the door. "May I come in, auntie?" she said. Her eyes were red and swollen with weeping, but she was very quiet now as she leaned her head on Agatha's shoulder. Then she said:

"I hated to disturb you, dear auntie—but mamma said—if you would please—cut—some of papa's—hair—for—us." Then the child broke down.

Her aunt drew her closer to her side as she sobbed in the abandonment of her grief, but her own face was calm as ever as they entered together the chamber of death. As she bent once more above the still cold form and took one of the curls, once brown and bright, now heavily streaked with gray in her trembling fingers, suddenly her own face grew white with pain, and she sank upon her knees by the bedside. So long she knelt there that Aggie grew frightened and spoke to her. She did not answer, and when the child ran out into the hall crying that "auntie had fainted," and the physician reached her side, he only needed to lift the white hand that still lay upon Herbert's head to say "She is dead!"

And it was true. Right or wrong as her sacrifice may be deemed, we verily believe God had given her her reward, and she was gone to "that land, where there is no marrying or giving in marriage."

ROBBY'S WEDDING PRESENT.

Field, Mary J

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ROBBY'S WEDDING PRESENT.

BY MARY J. FIELD.

A VERY dear friend of Robby Merton's mother was soon to be married, and Robby confided, first to his sisters and then to his mother, his intention of spending his money, which he had been a long time hoarding, to buy a wedding present.

"I hardly think she will expect one from you, Robby," his mother said. "You had better keep your money to buy presents for Bessie and May at Christmas."

But Robby was firm in his intentions, trusting to fortune to send him supplies for other needs. He also took it upon himself to purchase the present, declining his mother's aid and advice.

Accordingly, he made a trip to the city one day, and returned with two large packages, which he triumphantly deposited upon the table.

"There, I didn't have quite enough

money, and I met Mr. Clinton and he lent me a dollar," untying the parcel as he spoke, "and here's the vase," placing upon the table a prodigious china urn, with a flaming display of flowers painted on either side of it.

"O, a pitcher!" said Bessie.

"A vase?" said May, viewing it doubtfully. "Why didn't you get a glass one, Robby?"

"Glass breaks so," said Robby. "I might have dropped it bringing it home."

"Let us see what is in the other bundle," said his mother.

Robby quickly untied it, displaying a bracket only equalled in want of beauty by the vase itself.

"Wont that do?" he asked, appealingly, of his mother.

Mrs. Merton hesitated, not having the

heart at once to answer that she did not think it would.

"Isn't the vase rather large, Robby?" she asked.

"Hold the more flowers," said Robby.

"Where did you get it?" his mother asked.

Robby told her.

"Could you change it?"

Robby thought not.

The bracket was too heavy and too shiny, his mother said; but Robby said she did not know, that all the brackets were heavy and shiny; it was fashionable for brackets to be heavy and shiny.

"I would try and exchange the vase though, Robby," she advised.

"But there isn't any time," said Robby. "I've got to carry the present this afternoon."

"Why this afternoon?"

"Cause it's a bother," said poor disheartened Robby.

"I'll go to the city myself," said his mother, "and see what I can do."

But half the pleasure to Robby was the purchasing of the present himself, and he was in despair to think that his mother disapproved of his purchase.

"I won't give any present at all," he said. And embracing the vase with one arm and the bracket with the other, he marched out of the room. His mother called after him, but he did not heed her.

"He will be back presently," she thought to herself, "and then I will reason with him, poor little fellow."

But Robby did not return even at dinner time, a time when he was rarely missing, and nobody could find him. In the afternoon May and Bessie went out in the field in search of him. May knew of a little corner among the rocks, not far distant from the house, where she had often gone herself to weep away any sorrow that oppressed her; thither she went in search of her brother, and there, surely enough, she found him.

But what had he been doing? What was he still grinding with such angry vigor beneath the heavy stone which he held in his hand? What but the unfortunate vase with its flashy adornments!

"Why, Robby!"

"Good enough for the old thing!" said Robby.

"Let me help you," said Bessie, picking up a stone and drawing near.

"Get out!" said Robby, hitting her with his elbow, so that Bessie fell backward, and but for May must have hurt herself severely upon the rocks.

"Dit out o'ersels!" shouted Bessie, as she recovered her equilibrium.

Robby's ill-humor took flight immediately upon Bessie's fall, and he laughed immoderately at her rejoinder.

"The old thing's smashed any way, isn't it, Bess?" And he began to whistle.

"But it took all that money you've been saving so long," said May, regretfully.

"Yes," said Robby, "that and more too, and that's the hard part."

"I don't think you ought to have broken the vase up," said May.

"I couldn't exchange it," said Robby, "and it was horrid."

"O, I have it!" said May, jumping up and down with delight. "Aunt Celia gave me a beautiful piece of fringe, crimson and gold; you could put it round the bracket."

"What do I want to put it round the bracket for?" demanded Robby, fiercely; "the bracket is well enough."

"But it is so large," said May, "it would look better with the fringe round it, I think."

"Well, show us the fringe," said Robby, as they neared the house. And May ran eagerly to get it.

It was heavy handsome fringe, and Robby rather liked the looks of it round the bracket.

"I was sure you would like it," said May, delightedly, "and I know what would be beautiful."

"What?" demanded Robby.

"A basket of flowers on top of the bracket. I'll give her the basket, that pretty willow one of mine, you know, and Bess can give the flowers."

Robby liked the idea, but found that it required all the generosity and stoicism that he possessed to consent to the carrying of it out. However, he was pleased when the presentation was made, and he received his share of praise and thanks. Mr. Clinton, of whom he had borrowed the dollar, kindly made him a present of it on learning his difficulty, so that Robby was once more a happy boy, expending his ill-temper grinding the remaining portion of the unfortunate vase into a white powder, which he sold to his sisters for sugar when they afterward played at keeping store.

ROBERT RAMBLE.

BY BOBSTAY.

KNOCKING around the world as I have, one stands a poor show for getting an education; and while he may pick up enough to carry him through the common duties of life, and even feel quite proud of his attainments, yet when he comes to write his own autobiography, he finds at once how lamentably deficient he is, and in many instances how woefully ignorant.

Aware of all my defects, I am going to try and tell you how I started from a boy and worked my way from nothing into a position that, to say the least, is one to be proud of, if not envied.

My father died at an early period in my life, I being but three years old at the time; consequently I remember nothing of him. My mother, I presume, was inconsolable at the time of the demise of her husband, but she forgot her sorrows in a brief year, and took another partner in her voyage of life; so I now had a new father. Mother died two years after this, and my stepfather, with unseemly haste, took another wife to his bosom after waiting half the time allowed to elapse by my mother

after her great and my greater loss, before her second marriage.

My stepmother did not take favorably to me at all, but Mr. Warner, whom I looked on as a father, was very kind, saving me from much ill-treatment, and making my home seem tolerably pleasant. He was henpecked himself, but he managed to endure the tempers of his irascible spouse for five years, when he was accidentally killed by a brick wall falling on him at a large fire in our town, he at the time acting as policeman.

I thought my cup of bitterness was filled when my stepfather's mangled remains were brought home; my grief at the calamity far exceeding that of the widow, who bore up bravely under her bereavement.

My life had been unpleasant before this, but now it became a burden; and when Mrs. Warner consoled herself, as she did in a few months' time, the bitter cup before me, that was filled before, now overflowed, for the new husband, as soon as he was fairly installed in his new possessions, got rid of me as an encumbrance, by giving

me a ticket on the railroad to New York, a couple of dollars, and a kind request for me to go there as speedily as possible, and never show my face round his premises again.

I took the ticket, money and advice, and left as requested. A more mournful boy never emerged from a railroad depot in the world, and never was lad more frightened by a crowd.

What I should do or where I should go, I couldn't tell. Homeless and alone, I was but a waif discarded by those who should have considered my tender years, and provided for me in a different manner; but there I was, swamped and lost.

"What are you doing here?" asked a rather seedy-looking man, as I wandered about the depot in a disconsolate manner.

Glad of having some one to listen to a recital of my woes, I told my simple story in hopes of interesting him in my welfare. The man heard me patiently, and then said:

"Rough on ye, aint it, little one?"

I sobbed for my reply.

"See here, sonny, you're in a tight fix this time, but I know a place where they does for the likes of you, and if yer'll stop yer cryin', so's not to get a crowd round, I'll help yer to find the place."

Thankfully enough I accepted his offer.

"Give us yer bundle an' yer money, so no pesky thief will go through your pockets; give us yer hand, and come along."

I obeyed him, with implicit trust in his abilities to help me in my difficulties, and having made him custodian of all my earthly riches, off we started.

Up one street, ducking between teams at crossings, and over to another, my guide led me, until at last we came to a large stone building that my new-found friend called the office of the gentleman he was carrying me to.

"Now, sonny," he said, "I expect to meet a man here on business that I would not miss for the world; so you run up the steps, go into the front door, up the stairs, and sing out for Mr. Cop. When he comes, tell him that Mr. Bummer is at the front door and wants to see him, but hasn't time to come in."

Glad that my tramp was over, I obeyed with alacrity, went inside, up the stairs, as directed, and shouted for "Mr. Cop" in

a very fair key, wondering which of the many doors I saw before me he would come out of.

No attention was paid to me the first or second time I shouted, but the third time did the business for me; for I saw a man in blue coat with brass buttons on it, and a heavy shiny-looking cap, with a club in his hand, approaching rapidly.

Thinking Mr. Cop must be an officer in the New York militia company, just as Captain Trimmage, the tailor in the place where I came from was, I approached him boldly.

"What in thunder you making such a row for in here?" he said, sternly, grasping me by the collar, and shaking me roughly as he spoke.

He was so cross that he nearly scared the life out of me, and I burst out sobbing, the tears, in scalding rivulets, running down my cheeks, and attesting to the sincerity of my grief.

"Country boy, aint you?" the man asked, in somewhat milder tones, as he witnessed my fear.

I nodded in reply, fearing I had offended him by making too much noise, and that he would not help me if I had made him mad.

"What is the trouble?" he asked, in still softer tones, pitying the distressed state of my mind.

"Mr. Bummer is out on the doorstep, and would like to have you come down, as he is afraid he shall miss meeting a gentleman, Mr. Cop," I said, fluently, seeing his wrath was tempered down.

"What?" he said, in astonishment.

I repeated my statement with more confidence, telling Mr. Cop, who seemed to have recovered his good-nature completely, how I had made the acquaintance of Mr. Bummer.

"Poor boy!" said the man when I finished my narrative. "You have been cheated out of what little money you had, as well as your spare clothes. You fell into the hands of some sneak thief, and he sent you up here to get rid of you. He probably run as soon as you entered the doorway. This is the City Hall, and I am a policeman on duty here. The thieves call us officers 'Cops.' I am sorry for you, but that can't help you. You are now cast upon your own exertions, and you must work for a

living, doing the best you can. Run errands, black boots, sell papers, do everything and anything you can; but remember, if you steal, your chance for detection is sure, and then you are ruined. Now make no noise, but run right along, and if you see the chap that stole your money and clothes, tell the first man dressed like me to arrest him for a thief; then go to the station house with them, and have the rascal put through. Now cut away."

Worse off than before, I sought the street, finding that Mr. Bummer, my new-found friend, had disappeared from view, and with him my money and clothes.

Dispirited and disheartened, I wandered sadly along, coming at last to the docks, my grief being so bitter as to make me forget my hunger.

"Here, boy!" shouted a man from a vessel, at which I stood gazing idly; "just lend us a hand here."

I sprang with alacrity at his call, finding that he wanted me to help him get a trunk into the cabin below decks.

"You are a handy Billy," he said, approvingly, when it was placed in a closet-like place, with a couple of narrow shelves in it, as it then appeared to me, but which I found afterwards was a stateroom, the shelves being berths to sleep in.

I made no reply to the compliment, but felt better immediately.

"How much you want for that job?" he asked, with a searching gaze.

"Nothing, sir," I replied, feeling that I had done nothing worthy of compensation for the slight service rendered.

"Nothing! that aint like New York boys," he said, in surprise. "Where do you hail from?" And again he eyed me attentively.

His question fell useless on my ear, for not understanding the question, I gave him a look of inquiry.

"Where do you belong?" he asked, seeing I misunderstood him.

I told my story again.

"Fell among sharks, have ye? Well, it is mighty small potatoes to shanghai a serving-mallet like you; and as you are in a stew, and seem to be a well-disposed boy, if you want a job, I'll help you."

I had nothing to lose this time, so knew that this man who was offering to befriend me was sincere; and I said I wanted somewhere to sleep and something to eat, for I

now began to feel the cravings of a boy's appetite, and was willing to work all I could, if I could only have a chance to do so.

"You are a midget to take to sea," he said, musing with himself, "but perhaps I can't do better. I bought this bark today, and the shipkeeper having gone to supper while my trunk came down, I got you to give me a lift. Now if you want to go to sea, here is a chance, for I will take you now, and have you black my boots, and chore round, and the likes of that, until we are ready to sail, when I will ship you in some shape or other, if you want to be a sailor boy."

Can any one wonder that a boy, eleven years old, deserted by every one, without a cent in his pocket, nothing to eat and nowhere to go, should accept the offer at once, as I did?

I assented quickly, and was assigned a berth in the house on deck, the man fitting it with some spare bedclothes, putting it into what he called "apple-pie order," although it seemed small and hard in comparison to the old-fashioned four-poster I had hitherto been accustomed to. I was not in condition to be dainty, however, and looked my satisfaction at the new quarters provided for me.

The shipkeeper having returned when the preparations were completed, my new friend told him I was to stay on board, and that he must keep an eye on me, and see I didn't cut up any capers.

"Now, youngster," he said, when this was done, "let's make a trip on shore and get our chuck."

I didn't know then that he meant for us to go to get something to eat, but without the faintest conception of what a "chuck" was, or how it looked, I followed him obediently. We went to a restaurant near the ship where the vessel lay, and going in, my new friend said to a man leaning in his shirtsleeves over the counter, with a clean white apron on, "Tom, this lad will get his meals here every day until I sail. Charge it to me."

With a sharp glance at me, that he might remember my appearance, the person addressed nodded assent. So we entered a slip, my leader dropping a curtain before us, and directing me to sit down on the little bench that was on one side of the compartment, took a seat for himself on the

other, with a straight table painted to imitate marble between us, and ordered a supper for us both of the waiter, who poked his head behind the curtain as we sat down.

The smell of food made me hungry enough, and I did full justice to the viands before me.

"Can you find the way back?" he inquired, when we finished.

I wasn't sure, not having noted the way particularly, but said I thought I could.

"Well, my lad, I'll show you back again, but just keep your eye to wind'ard, and watch the landmarks, for after this you'll have to come alone. Let's see if you've got your bearings. You lead, and I'll follow in your wake, and see if you can navigate to the vessel. Heave ahead!"

I managed to understand his peculiar phraseology this time, and keeping sharp watch of how I went, led him directly to the vessel without any mistake in the way.

"Can you find your way back to-morrow morning?" he asked, as we clambered on board again.

I was confident that I could, and so replied in the affirmative.

"Very well; you can go for your meals alone, then, in future, after the keeper comes back from his. Now come into the cabin, black my boots for me, brush my coat, and then you can turn in whenever you like; but in the morning you must turn out before I do, shine them up a bit before I am up, which will be at six, and be ready to hook on to whatever job I set you to."

"Yes sir," I said, and followed him into the cabin again.

While he was arranging his toilet, I went to work polishing his boots, something I was accustomed to, always having done that for Mr. Warner, and succeeded in finishing them, with justice to the blacking, just before they were called for.

"Now dust off my coat," said my master, having drawn on the boots, and handing me a whisk broom as he spoke.

This being done, he told me to get on deck, which I did, seeing him leave the vessel and depart from the dock.

The watchman with whom I was left was a good-natured fellow, and kept me, until nearly ten o'clock, laughing at his stories of how he had to keep a bright lookout for thieves, or "wharf rats," as he called

them, from stealing even the sails and rigging from the vessel in the nighttime, and the things he had done to circumvent them.

"How do you manage to keep awake in the day, if you are up all night?" I asked, at last.

"There's another man here then," he informed me; "and then I turn in. But this job won't last long, for I believe the skipper will have his officers on board shortly, and I'll be discharged."

"What's a skipper?"

"Skipper! he's the captain," he replied, astonished at my ignorance.

"What is his name?" I inquired, after I had digested this news.

"Name! Captain West. But who in the world are you, and where in the world did you come from? Is the captain any relation of yours?"

I told my story again, and received his sincere commiseration at my ill luck, but was warmly congratulated at having found a protector so easily; "For," said the watchman, "Captain West has got a heart like a bullock, and he'll see you through, if you toe the line in duty."

I promised with a deep yawn that I would behave myself every way.

"That's clever, Bob. Now turn in, for you are beat out."

I was tired, so found my quarters, and despite the new surroundings, was soon fast asleep, finally dreaming that I was falling into a well, and that my new father was pushing me down.

I felt something, that was sure; so rousing up, I found it was the watchman, who said, briskly, "Turn out lively, Bob, for it is five o'clock, and at six you must call the captain, who must find his boots in order."

It did not seem more than an hour since I went to bed, but I got up, washed in a tub on deck, went down and did my work, brushing the clothes that were thrown carelessly on a chair; and as the clock struck six, I rapped on the captain's door, arousing him at once.

Going on deck, I awaited him. Captain West was not long in coming, but he paid scarcely any attention to me, beyond giving me a faint nod, looked at the sky overhead, spoke a few words to the watchman, and disappeared over the side, saying to a man that was approaching him, "That boy on board is all right, and will stay

when you get dinner, if I am not there," and walked away.

The man proved to be the watchman for the day, for he came on board, and my acquaintance of last night left for his home.

There was nothing for me to do but loaf about the deck; but as the watchman, like the other, was a clever sort of a chap, he helped pass the time away by telling me what he could about a vessel, while I, eager to rub off the greenness about me, kept him busy all the time answering my questions.

I saw nothing at all of the captain until the next morning, and have no sort of idea when he came on board; but when I was waked up again, I found his boots and clothes in the same position as on the preceding morning, which I dutifully arranged and called him, only to see him leave as soon as he could.

Thus a week passed away, I doing nothing of any account, except getting considerable knowledge about the standing and running rigging, and even assisting the watchman one day after a rain in drying the sails, by loosing the royals, and furling them again when they were dried sufficiently.

The tenth day, when Captain West came on deck, he called me to go up town with him.

My trip was not far, for he took me to an outfitting store, purchased a chest, and gave me quite a respectable fitout for sea, telling the storekeeper to send the chest down, and me along with it, ordering me to doff my shore togs and don the new duds.

Behold me, that morning, in splendid array, white duck trousers, pump shoes, red shirt, a strap around my waist holding my trousers in position, while a sou'-wester cap was placed on my head with an air that would have graced a ward politician.

Mr. Warden the watchman showed me how to tie a square knot in my black neckerchief, and now I was a sailor boy in full bloom.

I had a sufficiency of clothes, for Captain West was not niggardly at all in my outfit, and I suppose that I unlocked my chest forty times a day and gazed at my new possessions with rapture and pride.

The next day a new scene was opened before me. A couple of men came on board about seven in the morning, Captain West contrary to his usual custom, awaiting

their arrival, and I soon learned that they were the first and second mates.

Large drays loaded with barrels and boxes began to arrive, a gang of stevedores followed, and soon purchases were roven over the hatchways, and the cargo began to come on board and be stowed.

I had hitherto been at liberty to lay idle all day if I chose; but it was new times now. I was kept busy all the time doing something, and it seemed at night as though every bone in my body had a separate and distinct ache, and that I was sore all over with running on errands about the deck, fetching a "slice" here, as the first mate persistently called a crowbar, and pulling a rope yonder, blistering my hands everywhere, getting in every one's way, and being out of the way all the time. The officers, however, were pretty good men on the whole, and I liked them first-rate, I thought, when I turned in after supper, tired as a dog with my day's work.

It was ten days before we were all loaded, the cargo coming in slashes, now, tons at a time, and then a long while before another pile came to replace the previous batch that was stowed snugly below as soon as possible after it arrived.

The vessel was full at last, and the hatches closed and battened down, and I heard the mate say we were all ready to haul out into the stream.

The captain took me to an office the next day, where I signed my name in scrawling letters, with some difficulty, running my tongue out an inch further than necessary, and feeling a little abashed as the clerk took the paper to which I had affixed my sign-manual, and glanced with scorn at the style in which I had performed the operation, and then informed me that the cook would show me the way back, as soon as he had signed the articles, which I was told was the shipping roll, and that I was entered at six dollars a month, and had got my advance credited to me.

I didn't understand anything that he said, his searching eye overpowering me with confusion; so I asked where the cook was. A man was pointed out, who shambled forward when he was called, penned his name rapidly, and shouting, "Come on, sonny!" led me away in utter astonishment.

It was the man who had robbed me when I first entered the city on my voyage of life! The advice of the policeman at the City

Hall rushed over me, but I was so thunder-struck that I could not follow it, although we passed several policemen on our way to the vessel.

The man did not remember me, or did not recognize me in my new clothes, for he chatted as unconcernedly as though I was an acquaintance he had known for years, his tongue, in the too well remembered tones running as volubly as when in fluent language he robbed me of my little all under the guise of friendship.

In bewilderment at his nonchalance I followed him down to the vessel, going on board in a vague way, utterly at loss what to do, and undecided whether to accuse him directly of the crime or not.

As I went on deck, I met the two watchmen, who had been discharged from their duties that day, and, having been on board to collect together a few traps of theirs, were about leaving. I told them my discovery, and asked their advice.

They commended me on my prudence in keeping silence, and told me that if I complained to the authorities the cook would be arrested, and I detained as a witness, and that I had better tell Captain West as soon as he came on board, and leave it to him to settle.

I accepted their advice, and having shaken hands with them, and received hearty wishes for my prosperity, I bade them good-by, never to see them again.

By ten the next morning the whole crew were on board, their chests disposed of in the fore-castle, the good barque Fowler hauled out into the East River, and now we were off for a voyage to Rio Janeiro, our pilot leaving us off the coast of New Jersey, taking an inward-bound vessel to return in. I was seasick a little the first day, but soon recovered, never to experience the horrible nausea again.

My duties were quite light, having to attend on the captain, cut up tobacco for him to smoke, and do anything I was called upon to do, which I tried always to accomplish with cheerfulness and alacrity.

During the passage out I told the captain about the cook, saying I had said nothing to the men forward about it; so he requested me to keep entirely quiet, leave the matter to him, and he would see that it was made right before the voyage was completed.

We were seventy days in our run to Rio,

and every one was delighted with the ship and officers. Captain West was a thorough sailor, and a Christian; which statement placed him in the category of a gentleman. He allowed no bullying or swearing at the men, and discouraging gambling among them, tried to make the voyage pleasant, as long as they behaved themselves.

The mates, of course, taking their cue from their superior, were very moderate in their ways, although they had a knack of punishing men for infractions of rules in a manner I disliked. The usual method was to set the men polishing iron cables, keeping them at work until each link shone like glass, never allowing them to leave a stint until it was finished. Consequently, we had for a few weeks, one chain rusting on deck while the other was being polished, and the sailors seeing the game, and understanding that they were well-used, soon fell into the notion of doing their work well and promptly, with as little trouble as possible.

We had an easy time of it on the whole, all hands being contented and peaceable, and the voyage began to be placed in the sailors' minds as one always to be remembered and quoted as a model ship with model officers.

When we arrived in Rio Janeiro, the captain gave me a great deal of liberty on shore, telling me to shun the *pulperias*, and see as much of the better class of the city as I could.

Accordingly I examined the city with much delight. It is a beautifully situated place; and being just within the tropics, its fine bay equals in beauty the famous one of Naples, or the Bosphorus at Constantinople, both of which far-famed places I saw afterward. Fantastic mountains enclose the bay, stretching along the shore in irregular and picturesque outlines, the city being built on level places between them. The streets wind in among the hills, and along the slopes rise rows of houses, their light walls and red-tiled roofs contrasting strikingly with the intervening masses of dark green foliage. The dwellings, usually of stone or stucco, are of two stories, which is rather uncommon in South America. The prominent elevations are occupied by churches and convents. On one side the Morro de Castello overlooks the harbor, with its fleet of foreign shipping, while on the other stands the convent of San Beato.

In front of the city, and facing the broad expanse of the bay, with its lovely palm-covered islands, was a terrace, three hundred feet long, paved with beautiful marbles, enclosed by low walls, with fine fruit trees and flower vases along its margin. The streets were filled with priests, monks of different orders, venders of sweetmeats, beggars and peddlers, the latter going about with trays of merchandise, as the ladies seldom go out shopping.

Especially to be noticed were the coffee-carriers; wagons were scarcely thought of there for trucking coffee; instead, long lines of half-naked negroes were to be seen bearing upon their heads great sacks of the fragrant berry, keeping time, in a running trot, to the measure of a monotonous chant.

Beautiful suburbs extended along each shore, and back into the interior, interspersed with villas and orange groves. Here resided most of the nobility, ministers of state, and ambassadors, forming a mixed population of Brazilians and foreigners from various parts of the world.

The line of negro coffee-carriers interested me greatly; and as the Fowler was to take a cargo of that merchandise to London, I watched them for hours bring our load down to us, their droning chant having a weird sound, it seemed so mournful in some of its cadences.

My sight-seeing in Rio was soon over, for our cargo was rattled out, and a new one hustled on board in short metre, and we soon were afloat on a voyage to London.

Captain West had taken a deep interest in my welfare, and now he began to give me what education he was possessed of, which was a fair common school knowledge; but with it he instilled in my mind a great reverence for the Bible, having me read aloud a chapter or more every day, explaining its precepts and teachings as well as he could.

He was not a bigot in any sense of the word, being pure-minded, and practising what he professed. The sailors all respected his authority, and there was no bullying, or overworking done, yet discipline, somehow or other, was never better on any ship where the men are cursed and beaten all the time, the blow before the curse; nor was there any difference in the time as to when the sun arose. I have seen ships where the sun came up at three o'clock in the morning, never setting until nine at

night, and it was on such vessels that the master was a cur and his officers bullies.

About a week after we left Rio, I was talking with one of the sailors about myself, telling him how I came to go to sea, and all about my misadventures in New York, not mentioning, however, that the cook was the thief, the man, in his sailor-like way saying when I had finished, that "if he had been round, about that time, he would have knocked the feller into the middle of next week in quarter less than no time."

As he finished his passionate declaration, I glanced round and saw the cook, the very one I didn't want to hear me, had approached silently and overheard our whole conversation, for he gave me a glare like an infuriated puma in the jungle of the country we had just left, warning me at once of an enemy I had created.

Sorry that in a moment of ungarded loquacity I had betrayed myself to the man who had wronged me, I sought the cabin at once, and having a good opportunity I told Captain West the dilemma I now found myself placed in.

After a little reflection he said, "Now is the time to settle this thing; so pass the word for the cook to come aft."

In a few moments the man was below, in answer to the call, his countenance wearing a dogged look of resolution.

"Cook, have you ever seen Bob before?" asked Captain West, mildly.

The man hung his head down and declared he had never set eyes on me before he met me in the shipping-office.

"Very well," returned Captain West; "the boy thinks it was you, but by my request he has never said a word as to his belief in your identity, except to me. "Now if you are sure you are not the man, and that he is entirely mistaken, go forward to your duty again, and no one shall be informed against you. If you are innocent, your own conscience will sustain you in this case, while Bob will be sorry for his error; but if you are guilty, you will have the matter to reflect on until your dying day, and also make an account of it to Him who seeth all things, when you render a final account, in the life to come. Go forward."

The man shuffled away, his face wearing a peculiar expression, which seemed to say, "I'm lucky to get off so easy in this world, and I'll run my chance in another."

That night the cook caught me on the to'gallant forecastle, and while one of the men held my mouth so I couldn't cry out, he waxed me soundly with a piece of inch rope, making me writhe with agony at the torture inflicted.

I was full of wales when I was flung down on the deck, the cook saying as he released me, "There, you crockery-crate villain! I'll learn you to run to the cap'en with a pack o' lies; an' if yer tell any tales about this, I'll sarve ye out the wuss for it."

"No need of any tales, I heard a scuffling, and have got to the tail-end of this row. What is the trouble?" said Captain West, suddenly appearing on the scene.

The cook gave a hitch to his trousers, and said, "I aint goin' to allow no gallinipper like that to lie about me, so I just gave him a bit of my mind with a rope's end."

"I am sorry you took this way of easing yourself," replied the captain. "I'll take another. Mr. Sampson," he said, turning to the second mate, whose watch it happened to be, "call all hands."

Late at night as it was, and beautiful weather besides, the whole crew were soon, to their great surprise, mustered aft, heard my story told them by the captain, who allowed that I might have been mistaken about the cook, warned them that if any of them molested that functionary during the voyage he would set them to work polishing the cable, and also if the cook so much as touched me with his finger he would find something for him to do, while, if I alluded to the affair in any way, he would see that I was punished.

He then took for a text, "Thou shalt not steal," and expounded quite a sermon, making the cook as uneasy as an electrical eel, while the men, despite the captain's warnings, gave reproachful glances at that discomfited man.

I smarted on the surface some, but as the sermon poured into his ears, my persecutor looked the picture of shame. He was intensely relieved when the thing was over.

We all thought that the end had arrived; but we had a new feature to learn in the character of our captain. He came on deck the next morning, asked if the people had finished their breakfast, found they had, and directed the mate to muster the cook aft on the quarter-deck.

"Take off your hat," said the captain, as the man approached.

Silently he obeyed, and equally as quietly did our superior remove his, and, drawing forth a copy of the Holy Writ from his pocket, read in grave tones a chapter that must have sunk into the inmost recesses of the man's heart, and then expounded another sermon on crime, and the moral consequences thereof.

He dismissed the cook in half an hour, the crew tittering audibly as he slunk into his galley, for they had all watched the performance, although the mates, probably by direction of the captain, before he came on deck, kept them busy about something all the time.

After supper that night the cook had another chapter read to him, and another sermon for his especial benefit, the crew, with remarkable wit, holding aloof from the unfortunate man, never mentioning the subject, although they knew he was aching to relieve his mind to some of them.

A man can bear to be accused of anything if he thinks there is a chance to escape punishment; but for a man to be preached at so methodically as the cook was, without a single reference to any charge or sin in particular, especially if a crowd is within hearing, is altogether too much, and the cook only stood firm three days, under this novel treatment. The fourth forenoon he went into the cabin, told Captain West he was guilty of my charge; said he never did such a thing before; that he felt too mean to acknowledge it; but he would now, asked to be forgiven, and said he would make it right in a pecuniary sense when we got in London.

"If Bobbie forgives you, I am sure God will," said the captain, in impressive tones, to the penitent before him.

I did, I assure you, for I felt as badly as the cook did whenever he had to listen to a sermon, my sympathy making me forget entirely the distress in mind I experienced in New York. After receiving much good advice, the man was sent forward, and the singular meetings were over.

Although all the crew tried to find out what had occurred, I persistently declined to say anything in regard to the matter, while the cook went about his daily duties as usual, never once referring to his humiliation.

The mental punishment of the cook was severe; but while the captain thought his conscience was touched, he was now only

stimulating in order to take a revenge conceived in a murderer's heart.

Day after day the voyage went on, up the Southern Atlantic, out of the tropics into colder climate, and at last it was announced we were in the English Channel, the Fowler bounding merrily on, having had its share of fair breezes, foul weather and calms.

We arrived off Dover just at dusk one night, the captain setting a signal for a pilot in the afternoon. As night came on, a cold fog began to spread over the water and settle round us, while the vessel rocked in uneasy motion under the influence of a dead calm.

I had a bucket of slops to empty from the cabin, so going with it to the waist to throw it over, I felt myself grasped suddenly and thrown, bucket and all, into the sea, catching a view of the face of the cook, with a diabolical smile on it, as I went over the side to a watery grave.

I couldn't swim a stroke, but I howled for aid as I came to the surface, clinging to the ship's bucket with the desperate grip of a drowning person. Every one was in confusion as I shouted, and I heard the mate cry, "Man overboard!" as I was swept by the current out of sight of the vessel.

As I plunged into the water everything I had ever said or done flashed across my brain, although mechanically I shouted for help, expecting to sink every moment.

As I drifted out of sight of the vessel into the fog, I found I was not sinking, and tried to ascertain the cause. I discovered the reason immediately. The bucket that I had carried overboard with me had spilled its contents into the sea in my descent, and having inverted as I grasped it by the bail, with the air confined in it, acted as a perfect life-preserver, and as long as I kept it upside down I was safe if I had strength to hold on.

The wind began to increase some as I made this discovery, and I distinctly heard the shouts of a boat's crew that was lowered to save me, but was unable to make them hear my cries for succor, and soon lost all sound of them, the flashes of the gun that was fired from the deck to notify those in the boat where the Fowler was, growing dimmer every moment, and then fading out entirely. I gave myself up as lost, repeated a simple prayer, and being

nearly exhausted and chilled, was about to loose my hold and slip down to an unfathomable grave, when I saw a dark object loom up before me. My courage revived at once, and I soon made it out to be a vessel hove to in the fog.

Seeing I was drifting down on her, I held my peace, and waited to get fully within hail before I shouted again. Onward swept the current, and I soon ascertained that I was drifting directly on to her bows, so kept silence for a last endeavor in effecting my escape from death.

In a few moments I was directly under the bowsprit, and as the vessel pitched down, grabbed at the bobstay, catching it with a firm grip, let go my bucket with the other hand, and getting a strong hold, swung myself up out of the water, and soon was safe on the deck, dropping down limp and exhausted before the eyes of the astonished watch, who thought I was an apparition from the sea.

When I came to my senses I found I was in the cabin of a yacht that belonged to Mr. Glenthal, a rich broker in London. Having told my story to the owner, he informed me that he saw a pilot boat working up to the Fowler, and that the pilot was now on board; but he thought the skipper was scared a little, not knowing his position; but didn't dream that a man was overboard. He then repeated an oft-quoted sentence, which, as it was new to me, and I misunderstood him, I agreed to at once, for I thought he said, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends rough; hew them as we will." It was only his English way of speaking, however, and not a mistake in punctuation.

"Now, my lad," said the owner of the yacht, when he had heard my story, "I was only out for a cruise in the channel, and as my sailing-master is a thorough pilot, I'll run back to the city, put you in your consul's hands, and let him return you as soon as your vessel arrives. Will that serve you?"

I could only murmur my thanks for his kindness.

A bunk was furnished me, so I turned in, leaving my clothes drying before a cheerful stove in the men's quarters, and when I awoke again, found we were snug and fast in London.

After a hearty breakfast I was sent in charge of one of the men to Henrietta

Street, Covent Garden, where the representative of our nation has his office, and giving the consul a note from Mr. Glenthal, who merely stated that I was an American seaman that had got overboard, and being picked up by his yacht, was consigned to his hands, the man left me and returned to his vessel.

"What vessel do you belong to?" asked the consul, after reading the note.

"The Fowler, Captain West, with coffee for London, from Rio, sir."

"Where is the Fowler now?"

"She ought to be in to-day, sir. I got overboard in the channel, and Mr. Glenthal brought me directly here," I replied.

"Very well, wait around; and if Captain West does not arrive before night, I will furnish you with a boarding-house until he gets in," was the consul's statement, waving his hand with dignity for me to leave his private office and remain in the outer one, where a group of sailors were congregated.

In silence I bowed, and retired as directed. The sailors in the outer room immediately began to quiz me to find out where I came from, how I got adrift from a vessel, and whether I had been in a hospital or not.

I was rather reticent about myself, satisfying their curiosity without telling my adventure, and taking a seat and an old American newspaper that lay on a table, tried to while away the hours reading about home.

I had been engaged for an hour perusing the sheet before me, when I saw the form of Captain West appear in the room, his face showing traces of sorrow.

Before I could speak he had entered the consul's private office, so I slipped along in his wake, following him in.

"Why, how do you do, Bob?" said the consul to my captain.

Captain West responded heartily, and the two shook hands.

It appears that the official was an old friend of the captain, having been appointed to his office after the Fowler left home, the consul not knowing where his friend was.

"There was a lad in here this morning inquiring for you, but I did not connect my friend with the captain he wanted," the consul said, after the salutations were given and mutual explanations made.

"A boy asking for me?" inquired Captain West, in surprise.

"Yes. He said he got—here, bub," he said, suddenly noticing my presence, "here's your captain, now report and wait outside."

Captain West turned round, saw me, grasped me in his arms, and to my surprise kissed me.

"How in the world did you contrive to get here before me?" he murmured, as he relinquished me.

I told the story of my attempted murder to the astounded listeners.

"I will have this cook arrested at once," said the indignant consul, as he heard my narrative.

"You will oblige me if you will," Captain West said, briefly.

The consul immediately sent a clerk to Scotland Yard for an officer, who soon arrived, and on receiving his instructions, departed at once on his mission.

"Bob," said Captain West, after the officer had gone, "you are surprised, no doubt, at the emotion I betrayed on seeing you, and you will be more surprised when you learn why I am so interested in you and your welfare. Your father and I were half-brothers. We both wanted your mother to marry us, and as she preferred your father to me, I cleared out and went to sea, never hearing from them again, until you, the very image of your father, came on my vessel to lend me a hand. Hearing your tale of sorrow, I immediately decided that I would take you under my charge, although you were my own son, if you proved to be worth it, and I felt as though my child were lost when I found you were overboard; but now, thank God, you are restored to me again, and I tell you our position toward each other so you can understand why I have shown you more leniency than, perhaps, I should have extended toward an ordinary cabin-boy."

I had never known that my father had a half-brother, so I was entirely confounded at finding that, after all, I had some one in the world to care for me and extend a helping hand.

My feelings overpowered me so much that I could not help crying, and even the eyes of Captain West were moistened with tears, while the consul blew his nose so vigorously that it sounded like a clarinet, as he heard the story.

That night the cook was lodged behind bolts and bars, so that he could be found when wanted; and he must have been in a strange frame of mind when he found his villany was discovered, and his punishment in this world certain.

Captain West asked me a great many questions about my father and mother that night, but I do not remember of his ever alluding to them again.

The cook was returned to New York in irons in the Fowler with us, but escaped punishment from lack of evidence to convict him, although the judge was very severe in his remarks as he discharged him.

I sailed many voyages with Captain West in the Fowler to all parts of the world, working my way through the various grades from cabin-boy to that of his chief mate, and I never saw him any different from what he was on my first trip to Rio.

In time I succeeded to the command of the vessel, and then, as he always remained single, he stayed at home and looked after my own family while I was away, for in time I married, and had boys of my own, who are now almost ready to begin on the Fowler to be ready to take her when I leave

the sea, and Captain West is deemed to be grandfather to all of them.

He is a hale, hearty old gentleman now, and as he is extravagantly fond of my youngest boy, I think in the years to come, when a long and honorable life is finished, he will make him a successor to the property he has accumulated.

May the day be distant when the Grand Master calls for his faithful servant, for he is one truly, and one who alway tried to better the condition of those who for the time have been under his immediate control, trying to wean them from the usual vices to which mariners are addicted, and teach them that there is something beyond their usual cry of "a short life and a merry one," failing in some cases, but succeeding with many, who, in after years, blessed the day that they fell into his hands, and rose above the condition to which degradation had frequently plunged them.

Captain West, although he was not a liberally educated man, was the beau ideal of all sailors who knew him, and among others who respect him above measure is the writer of this humble sketch, Robert Ramble.

RUTH'S ROMANCE.

BY MRS. B. F. CULBERTSON.

My sister June was coming home. Mamma looked up from her letter and told us, her pretty face all aglow with pleasure. Clara's brows half-knit with vexation, even as she smiled, and Pearl waltzed around the room in a perfect ecstasy of delight; while Ruth glanced up from her sewing, with one of those rare smiles that transfigured her face.

"How glad I am!" exclaimed Pearl. "Now that our princess is coming home, there will be such gayety the fairies will quite envy us!"

"You seem to forget," quoth our elegant Clara, "that our country apparel will make us look like dowdies beside June. I shall be glad to see her, of course, though her style and beauty always eclipsed us."

Mamma, quite startled by Clara's outburst, began a reprimand; but bright little Pearl, whom Clara never could hold in subjection, whirled up to her, saying:

"Clara Vale, you are wicked! If June wins Stanley Grey from you, he is not worth the winning." Then she danced away, quite unmindful of the darkening of Clara's eyes.

There were six of us. One brother, Mark, who was a successful lawyer in a neighboring city; and June, ah, our princess June! with her black wealth of hair and great Spanish eyes—her perfect features and proud graceful mien! And Clara—not less proud, not less graceful—scarcely less handsome,

but lacking the brilliance of brunette beauty; still delicately lovely with her flossy yellow curls, her sweet lips, and tall willowy form. Next came Pearl, the purest, prettiest little brown-eyed witch, whose loveliness waned somewhat beside June's great beauty, but who was petted and caressed, among those who knew her, and, next to Ruth, loved more than any of us. Her complexion was not like June's, nor white and pink like Clara's—only clear and pure as the gems whose name she bore; with little color save in the lips, and once in a while a wild-rose tint fluttering in and out among the dimples in her cheeks.

Ruth was our old maid. Leastways, that is the title Mark's wife and Clara bestowed upon her, though I believe it was not that she was old—she was twenty six—but that she cared so little for society, and so much for home, and was so quiet and useful. I am puzzled to describe Ruth as I would like. While I can tell you that her features were as pretty as those of either the others, and her eyes like purple pansies, that her hair was a warm sunny brown, and lay in great waves over her head, notwithstanding her efforts to brush it back in the most old-maidish way possible. While I can tell you that her form was exquisite—I cannot tell you what an ineffable sadness lurked around lips and eyes.

Not but that she was always cheerful—she was never otherwise. Still, there was something about her which made you think that the shadow of some old sorrow drooped over her; though what sorrow she had ever had was beyond my ken, until—but I anticipate.

She sang as sweetly as a bird, and though not as brilliant a performer as June or Clara on the piano, her touch was exquisitely delicate, and more apt to please than theirs; and though only a schoolgirl myself, I could see that, had she the will to do so, she could quite eclipse the others.

The girls had ceased to expect her to accompany them to parties, though Pearl was wont to tease her to do so. Mamma always sighed when she listened to Pearl's vain importunities. And once I saw papa brush away a tear, when mamma said to him:

"It grieves me to see that Ruth has grown so quiet, and looks so sad. She cares nothing for society now."

"Still," said papa, "she is infinitely sweeter and more lovable as she is."

"But not so happy, Robert!"

They did not see me, for the lamps were burning low, and I was only standing on the threshold; but I slipped out quietly, wondering vaguely if Ruth had ever been happy and gay as Pearl, or cared for society as June and Clara did.

June did not live at home, but in New York, in the family of Mrs. Loson, my father's childless and wealthy sister. The last two years had been passed in Europe, and now, having returned, they were to spend the summer with us.

Coming up the walk from school the next evening, the very trees seemed to whisper, "June is here!" and I bounded in, unmindful that I should meet others than my sister. But I shrank back half-startled, when, perceiving me, she came to meet me, she seemed so regally beautiful. My sweet, proud June! She brought me to a sofa where Ruth was sitting, and then told us of those grand old countries over the sea, while I almost held my breath to listen, fearful I might miss a word.

"But the grandest, fairest spot has not the charm of home, little Allie, and I am glad to be here again, if only for a summer. And Ruth, I met a friend of yours, across the ocean. A brave handsome gentleman, who asked me innumerable questions of you. Such a sweet picture I drew of you at home! Ah, sister! I've always longed for your place,

though I know I have not your ability to fill it."

Ruth's face, just then, might have been that of a statue, it looked so cold and still.

"Who was this friend, for whom you drew the picture of your old maid sister?" she queried, almost icily, the constraint was so apparent.

"Neal Nemberton."

What ailed Ruth? Her breath came in short gasps, and her eyes dilated strangely; then darting a swift startled glance at June, she left us abruptly.

"Poor dear Ruth!" sighed June.

All the evening I kept wondering about her, for when she did appear, she was quite unlike herself.

However, on awakening next morning, I did not think of my puzzle of the evening before. The school was to have a picnic that day, and then a long vacation; and as the morning was bright, I hardly thought of anything else, I was so happy in the pleasant prospect. June sent her maid to dress me, and I was in a perfect whirl of excitement until ready to go.

The academy was not far from my home, in rather a rural spot. A brook ran through the grounds, and the great building itself was almost overshadowed by the tall trees around it. I was in too much haste that morning, to loiter up the path to the bridge. There was a foot-log opposite our lawn, and by crossing it the way was lessened almost half. Having crossed there often, I had no thought of fear, and ran along quickly until almost across; but alas! some driftwood had lodged against the log, a branch of which caught my dress, and in my haste to free myself from the twig I lost my balance and fell in the water. Though not naturally timid, this sudden bath frightened me, and when falling I screamed loudly. I had observed two gentlemen close by the bank, but before they could rescue me, I might drown, I thought in despair, for at this place the water was quite deep. I sank, and lost all consciousness, and when I recovered, I was lying on the bank, surrounded by my classmates and teachers. A stranger, whose dripping garments led me to infer that he was my preserver, bent over me. There was a carriage near, and they lifted me in, and the stranger accompanied me home. He was very kind, and I could not help noticing how immeasurably superior he was to any one I had ever known. Not that I knew many

gentlemen; Clara's admirers, handsome Dr. Grey and Colonel Wrayton, the professors and clergymen were about all; but this gentleman was much nobler looking than any of them.

The door was open when we arrived, and Clara came forward frightened by the sight of my poor wet organdie, whose ruffles seemed weeping for their own ruin. During the explanation that followed, June appeared.

"Mr. Nemberton!" she exclaimed, the greatest surprise and pleasure gleaming in her radiantly beautiful face. He seemed quite as much surprised and pleased as herself; then turning to me—Clara was trying to get me off—he said:

"And you are the little sister Alice, of whom I have heard so much!"

"Yes sir; and I suppose you are the friend of Ruth, June spoke of last night," said I, in as tactless a way as might be expected from a child; not at all comprehending June's amazement, nor mamma's swift look of almost painful consternation, only noticing Mr. Nemberton's radiant face, at the mention of Ruth. Mamma had been crying over me so much, I think she hardly noticed the gentleman till now, but she came forward, not in the manner I thought she should have done, but with a queer kind of constraint, which looked odd, to say the least.

The confusion had been so great that we had not noticed Ruth, who now stood beside me, her great purple eyes dilating, and a new expression, indescribably sweet, glowing in their depths.

"Miss Ruth! my dear friend!"

That was all; but what a world of sad tenderness in the voice and eyes. But they hurried me off up stairs, wondering at this mystery which seemed to thicken around Ruth.

Our village was soon after electrified by the arrival of a party of city pleasure-seekers. Followers of our June it appeared, for they flocked out to our house, "wild," they expressed it, "to see dear Miss Vale."

One of them, Miss Julia Weswin, called, and had hardly exchanged a dozen words with June and Clara, when she inquired for Ruth. She was a dark beauty, and her face seemed very winning, when she added, confidentially:

"We used to be the dearest friends in the world, you know, and I long so much to see her."

So I was sent for Ruth, and returning with

her, saw her greet the lady kindly, though not very warmly, though Miss Weswin expressed the greatest delight.

"But, Ruthy, how faded you are getting! Really, I should hardly have known you on the street, dear. Neal, that is, Mr. Nemberton told me how sadly you were changed, but I could hardly think it possible."

Waves of color surged over Ruth's delicate face, but she only smiled sadly, while she made some light reply.

The visitor did not linger long then, but she came often afterwards, though Ruth rather seemed to avoid her. Her conversation was chiefly of Mr. Nemberton, whom, to judge by her remarks, she was shortly to marry.

One day she spent an hour enumerating to my sisters the pleasures she anticipated in Europe, where it appeared her honeymoon was to be spent.

"I have been there, you know; but now it will be different, and far more delightful, with one so appreciative of the beautiful as Neal."

The morning was rather cold, and noticing a whiteness around Ruth's mouth, I thought she was chilly, and begged June to let me close the window by which she sat, toying with the honeysuckle drooping on the outside. Dropping the buds, she queried:

"Your engagement with Mr. Nemberton is quite recent, is it not?"

"O no! one of the old-fashioned long ones; in truth, of several years' duration. Not made public now, only to our most intimate friends."

By-and-by, the sun shining clear and warm, I went out to search for botanical specimens. While busily examining a plant, who should accost me but Mr. Nemberton, who had been angling in a brook near by.

"What a wreck you are making of that poor flower, to be sure, Allie," said he deprecatingly, looking at the mutilated petals and stamens.

"It was very beautiful, sir; here is another; is it not lovely?"

"Perfect in form and coloring; I appreciate its beauty, Allie."

"Miss Weswin says you appreciate beauty," said I, half dreamily.

"Miss Weswin! Do you know her?"

"O, yes indeed!" I cried gladly; for though I had in secret a kind of antipathy for Miss Weswin, I did like Mr. Nemberton, and was delighted to tell him I knew his betrothed.

And the further to prove to him that "small pitchers have great ears," I continued, breathlessly:

"And I have heard her speak so much of you, and the beautiful places you are to visit after your marriage."

"What beautiful places are they, little Allie?"

"O, the Italian cities, and Paris, and Switzerland, and—and everywhere!"

"I dare say!" looking infinitely amused. "But pray, how did she know that I would ever be married?"

"Mr. Nemberton, she considers Ruth and June as dear friends, and did not hesitate to tell them of her engagement to you. I was in the same room, but they thought I was engrossed with my new cabinet."

"Her engagement to me!"

I actually felt my eyes grow larger.

"Did you say she told Ruth this?"

"And June—certainly. But perhaps I ought not to have spoken so freely. Clara says I talk too much, but indeed I did not mean to betray confidence, sir."

"Little girl, I am very far from censuring you; you have rendered me, perhaps, a greater service than you imagine. I will walk home with you, now, if you have finished botanizing."

The remainder of the walk was spent in pleasant conversation. When we reached the house, Mr. Nemberton requested me to send Ruth to the library, which I did, and then went out berrying with Pearl.

Hours later, having forgotten all about Mr. Nemberton, thinking only of a fearful rent

in my dress, which would insist on telling a vague story of a romp among the hawthorns, I ran to mamma in the deepest penitence.

On opening the library door, what was the tableau before me? Not mamma, trimming her cap, certainly. But our dear Ruth, her face radiantly beautiful, and in most alarming proximity with Mr. Nemberton. Optical illusions are *not* so rare, but I must insist that I caught a glimpse of a coatsleeve around Ruth's waist!

"Come in, Alice!" And if the impudent man did not kiss my sister before my eyes! "You must know how happy you have made us. But for your innocent confidences this morning, we might have been as unhappy in the future, as, through the agency of Julia Weswin, we have been in the past."

And notwithstanding my protestation that I had not made them so happy (!) they would load me with caresses, till I ran off to mamma, whom I found with Clara in the dining-room. Mamma's eyes were filled with a suspicious moisture, and she was saying:

"And they have loved each other all these years, each believing the other false to the 'troth plight,' but still loving on, though hopelessly, till now."

So it followed that we had a double wedding, the following winter. Clara and Stanley Grey, and Ruth and Neal Nemberton.

With the bloom of love and happiness upon her face, I cannot but think that even June's proud beauty is surpassed by the sweet loveliness of my sister, who *was* an old maid.

SARA'S FATE.

BY BLANCHE SHAW.

"It is too bad! and I can't and wont stand it much longer. Spend all the golden spring-time of my youth in this dismal den, with nothing but clowns and milkmaids about me, when I feel that I am so well fitted to shine in a higher sphere. I wont! I wont!"

Thus soliloquized Sara Marsh one bright spring morning, as she dusted her aunt's cosy sitting-room.

"No, I wont!" she again ejaculated, with a decided shut of the mouth; and as if intending to begin her new course at once, she stopped work, and throwing her duster on a chair, folded her arms, and looked sullenly out of the window.

Poor little Sara! she had indeed a hard fate; and the coldest observer, looking through that white-curtained, vine-draped window into the bright sitting-room, and on the plump little form, in its neat pink dress and spotless apron, would have dropped a tear over her. Had a vision of the good aunt and uncle, of whose eyes she was the light

and joy, and who valued their well-earned wealth only as the means for protecting their darling when they were gone, been added to the scene, the beholder would have lifted up his voice and wept with her.

She stared obstinately out of the window, her brow growing blacker and blacker, till a voice called:

"Sary, Sary! When you finish the settin'-room come up to the front chamber, I want you."

She dropped her arms and shrugged her shoulders.

"There it goes again! That green country name, when she could just as well call me 'Sadie,' which is so fashionable. I've begged her to do it dozens of times, but it is no use. She always says, 'Child, you were named Sary, for your grandmother Marsh, and I wont insult her in her grave by covering up her name with fashionable grimcracks, which in her life she despised. Your friends may call you what they please, but to your

uncle and me you will always be Sary Marsh." She is right about the last part, for I will be Sara Marsh forever, before I'd marry any of the clowns about me! especially that Jasper Dodge, whom they think so much of. The idea of his daring to aspire to my hand!" And aroused by the thought, she seized her duster, and dusted savagely, till suddenly a loud crash stopped her, and she saw her aunt's household idol, John Bunyan in plaster, a mass of ruins at her feet.

Christian was never in a deeper "Slough of Despond" than was Sara, as she stood gazing on the result of her carelessness. What could she do? She knew that her aunt would be angry, and worse than that, deeply grieved, for the bust was the gift of a dear lost friend. Was there ever so miserable a creature! She wished, she wished—but her wish, if incoherent, was fortunately cut short by a knock, and she turned to behold standing in the doorway her *beau ideal* of manly beauty. He removed his hat, and bowing politely, asked:

"Does Mrs. Marsh live here?"

Sara blushed deeply, and spreading out her skirt to hide the wreck behind her, replied:

"Yes sir."

"May I see her for a few moments?" And taking permission for granted, he walked into the room.

Poor Sara stood at bay. There was the stranger, a glaring fact before her, and, equally a fact, behind her lay the remains of the learned John. Could she ask the elegant stranger to wait, and watch her go through the undignified manœuvre of "clearing up?" and dared she call her aunt into the room while it lay there? Foll well she knew the presence of forty strangers would not restrain her aunt's reproofs and lamentations. She stood speechless. The gentleman looked at her in surprise. Something must be done, and choosing to mortify herself, rather than trust it to her aunt, by a desperate effort she called up courage to say:

"I will call her in a minute, sir, if you will please wait till I pick up these broken pieces."

"Certainly," he replied. "Pray let me help you," and he came to her side. "You have met with quite a misfortune," continued he, as he bent over to pick up the pieces.

"Yes," replied Sara; and surprised into confidence by his kind tone, she added, "And I'm so sorry, for aunt thought so much of the figure. I am afraid to tell her."

"Don't be so heart-broken about it," said

he. "Let me see— Give me that piece. I am not sure but that the damage may be repaired."

"Can it?" exclaimed Sara. "Do tell me how, and I will be so much obliged to you!"

"It will take patience," said he, fitting the pieces together, "but it can be done."

Sara's face fell.

"Patience! I haven't a bit."

He laughed.

"That is a grave confession, young lady. You should cultivate it. I'll tell you what I'll do. I call to see if I could induce your good aunt to take me to board; and if she will, I'll give you a lesson in patience by showing you how to mend this."

"O, thank you! I hope—I think she will take you. I'll lay the pieces out of sight, and call her."

Mr. Wild so won upon Mrs. Marsh's affections that she consented to receive him into her family for a few weeks, and before night he was domiciled in the cosy best room. His coming so engrossed Aunt Marsh that she did not miss her beloved John; and Sara hoped they might be able to mend it, and return it to its place next morning while she was busy with her pies. Accordingly, the next morning, after she had discharged her duties, she wrapped up the pieces carefully, and went to the big elm, which spot she had selected for the work as the least liable to interruption. Mr. Wild was waiting for her, with all the necessary sticking material, and they at once began.

Sara was very anxious to help, but her eagerness made her useless, and she was obliged to take her lesson in patience by watching him work. At last it was all done; and with the exception of a slight irregularity on the bridge of his nose, and a scar on his left cheek, John was himself again.

"There, Miss Sara," said Mr. Wild, as he presented the last piece into shape, "I don't think that your aunt will discover your mischief this time, but I warn you John won't stand a second annihilation."

"I give you my word, he won't get it from my hands; I shall guard him as if he were gold. But how well you have done it! I should never know it had been broken."

"What's that that's been broken, Sadie?" asked a manly voice; and pushing aside the branches, a tall fine-looking youth stood before them. He appeared surprised when he saw the stranger, but he held his ground with dignity, and waited for her to introduce

him. She blushed scarlet, but did not say a word; and Mr. Wild, after waiting a minute, politely wished him, "Good-morning."

With a pained look at Sara, he returned the greeting, and added:

"I beg your pardon for intruding. Had I not supposed that Sa—I mean Miss Marsh's companion was one of the family, I should not have done so. Good-morning again;" and, before either could speak, he disappeared.

Sara felt hot and uncomfortable. Her companion did not speak, but she felt his eyes upon her, and she felt, too, that the light in those eyes was not flattering. She snapped the twig she held in a dozen pieces, and brushing the fragments from her apron, she said:

"That Jasper Dodge is always putting himself where he isn't wanted."

"Ah!" replied Mr. Wild. "I should scarcely imagine it, from his modest behaviour a minute ago. He is not a friend of yours, I infer, Miss Sara?"

"O my, no! I hope you don't think for a minute that I would have such a clown as he is for a friend."

Mr. Wild did not reply to this, but remarked that they had better take the bust back at once, for fear Mrs. Marsh would miss it. They took it back, and put it on the shelf; and to this day good Mrs. Marsh has never suspected the ordeal through which her pet passed.

The summer wore on. Each day Mr. Wild won ground and favor in the hearts of Mr. and Mrs. Marsh. His boarder dignity was soon laid aside, and he was admitted to the privileges of "one of the family." His "few weeks" doubled themselves, but still he stayed; and Sara fondly told herself that she was the magnet. Of course she was in love with him. She had elected herself to that fate the moment she saw him in the doorway; and from the eagerness which he displayed to be her escort at all the picnics and parties of the neighborhood, she drew the conclusion that he was similarly affected. Two things, however, ruffled the even tenor of her joy. One was, that Mr. Wild, with all his gallantry, never evinced any warmer sentiments for her than would be displayed by a rightly disposed brother for a good little sister. He laughed and danced with all the girls he met, fair or plain; distributed his Havanas and jokes among their brothers, and took as deep an interest in the family history of each, as if he were preparing a

biography of all the natives. At first this general dispensation of favor sat heavy on poor Sara's soul; but by a long and severe course of reasoning she brought herself to regard it in a very comforting light. It was no lack of affection that caused him to act so, but delicacy and consideration for her. He could not be so selfish as to monopolize her entirely, and so expose her to the envious sneers and taunts of her friends. He was so considerate, so different from Jasper; and then as "Jasper" fumed itself in her brain, the second cloud darkened her sky. What had become of him? She had seen him but once since the morning under the elm. It was at a party, and she indeed saw him, and that was all. He was so devoted to Maggie Day that he had eyes or ears for no one else. Since that evening he had disappeared from society, and as Maggie, too, was seen no more, circumstantial evidence was pretty conclusive that they consoled each other in their seclusion. Of course Sara did not care a snap! In fact, she was rather glad of it, for it would have made him feel so badly to see her smiling on Mr. Wild. Of course Maggie knew that she was "second choice," and— But that Maggie was such a spiteful girl! There was no telling what she wouldn't say. And she did hate to see Jasper cheated! she did that! And to her honor and mortification a tear got loose somehow and fell upon her hand. Poor Sara! Reason as deeply as her bothered brain could go, she could not find a consoling answer for this problem, and she resolved to give it up and forget it. But the resolution was more easily formed than accomplished, and the next morning, on her aunt's wondering where Jasper could be all this time, she started so violently that she upset a whole cup of coffee over the clean tablecloth, and then got a scolding for her awkwardness.

The summer clung on the edge of autumn. The day for Mr. Wild's departure was fixed, but his tale of love was still untold, and Sara began to feel that "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." One more day, and then he would be gone. Sara was sick with disappointment, and taking a book, she wandered to the seat beneath the elm, to seek the soothing balm of solitude. She sat down, but she threw the book on the grass beside her, and then she thought of the morning when they had, in that very spot, mended John's cracked skull, and of various other things of the same style, all calculated to dis-

perse gloom, and give her spirits a cheerful tone, till a footstep aroused her, and she beheld not Mr. Wild but Jasper Dodge standing before her. She started up, and turned first red and then white. Jasper was pale, too, and a good deal thinner than when he last stood there. From his appearance, Maggie, as a consoler, had not been a success. Sara bowed slightly, and without waiting for her to speak, Jasper began:

"I beg your pardon for bothering you, Sadie. I suppose I oughtn't to have done it, but I couldn't go away without saying good-by."

He stopped and looked at her with wistful eyes. Sara tried to say something, but her tongue was powerless, and the blood pressed so tightly around her heart that it almost smothered her. He waited a minute, and then continued:

"I see. I might as well have spared myself the trouble. It makes no difference to you. O Sara, Sara! Good-by!" And he turned to go.

Sara heard the noise of water rushing in her head. She put out her hands, and before she could help it called:

"Don't go that way! O Jasper, please don't!"

He turned back and looked at her.

"Why not, Sadie?"

"Because, because it makes me feel so badly. Where are you going, Jasper?"

"I don't know. I don't care. To sea, I think. It killed my father; perhaps it may be as kind to me."

"Killed your father?" she cried, remembering that she had seen the deacon safe and well a good hundred miles from the sea an hour ago. "Jasper, are you crazy?"

"I wish I were. I forgot you don't know. —no, no one here does. I am not Mr. Dodge's son. Years ago, when he lived by the sea, he took me, a half drowned babe, from the arms of my dead father, the only survivor from a fearful wreck. But this cannot interest you, Sadie. Once more, good-by! it may be forever."

He turned again, but once more footsteps sounded, and a voice called:

"Not so fast, young man!" And Mr. Wild, with sparkling eyes and radiant face, stood before them. "Not so fast, young man," he reiterated, as he caught Jasper's hand and

wrung it heartily. "I've been hunting for you too long to let you slip through my fingers in this style. What a bat I have been! To have the game right under my nose all summer, and never scent it!"

He paused for breath, and Jasper, with flashing eyes, endeavored to draw away his hand, but he held it tightly.

"Sir," he exclaimed, "how dare you! Release my hand! What does this mean?"

"It means that, next to myself, you are the happiest and luckiest fellow on this continent. It means that you are the possessor of as pretty an estate as Old England contains, and that, since your existence was discovered three years ago, I have spent most of my time hunting for you; and now I've found you." And seizing the other hand, he shook it with all his strength; then dropping them and folding his arms, he looked from Jasper to Sara.

Jasper passed his hand across his brow.

"Great Heaven! Can this be true?"

"True as fate, my friend! True as the ring of the gold I shall get for my work. And by Jove! to think how near I came to losing it! I owe it all to you, Miss Sara, and in return I will pray that when I visit the Hall, you may be mistress."

Sara started as if from a dream, and Jasper exclaimed:

"What is that? Do you not love her?"

Mr. Wild laughed.

"At the risk of being ungallant, I must say decidedly, no. Being the happy possessor of a pretty wife and two fat children, I find that after giving them their share of love, I have none left for any one else; and I don't think that Miss Sara will accuse me of having shown the slightest inclination to do so. Will you?"

He looked at the place where she was standing, but it was empty.

"Gone," said he, with a laugh. "A good cigar, my boy; take courage, for in spite of her whims, that girl loves you, and in spite of her faults, she is worthy of your love; and now to business."

The business took Jasper across the sea, where he staid till he persuaded Sara that she had done penance enough for her folly, and then he crossed over to take her back with him to the halls of his fathers.

SAVAGES--WHITE AND TAWNY.

BY W. H. MACY.

WE were lying off and on at Arorai, commonly laid down on the charts as Hope Island. Many of the natives who came off to drive a barter trade with us, appeared personally known to Captain Sisson, and recognized him at sight. I thought this strange, and expressed my wonder to the captain, who said that he once lived for several weeks on the island.

That evening, when we were more at leisure, he told me the story of his involuntary residence among the savages, which I give, as nearly as possible, in his own language.

I was; at the time it happened, only twenty-two years old, and was third mate in the *Antelope*. She must have been so named in derision, for she was an old wagon-built ship that would sail, as the saying is, almost as fast as you could whip a toad through tar. We had been out two years, and had made many changes in the crew, so that we had a motley crowd in the fore-castle, who might be classified, not as good and bad, but rather as bad and worse.

We had lowered in chase of a body of sperm whales one day, being then some five miles under the lee of Arorai, with light trades and fair weather. The old man had given up the starboard boat to me entirely,

for he was getting along in years, and was quite willing to rest on his laurels. My boat-steerer was a man we had shipped at Sydney, an ugly, pock-marked Liverpool Irishman, with a head like a bulldog's. I had always managed to keep the right side of McSweeney, and had never had any serious trouble with him. At the bow and midship oars were two other Australian "beach-combers," who would swear black was white at McSweeney's bidding, while the boy at the stroke-oar was more of a salt than a seaman, and might be easily influenced, especially for evil. There was only one in my boat upon whom I could rely at all times—the tub-oarsman, a wiry little Frenchman, who had stuck by us since we left home, and was much attached to me.

The mate struck a small whale soon after we lowered, but the school did not bring to, and we had to chase them to windward after they were "gallied," which, you know, is an uphill job. The second mate and I got separated in pursuit of different "pods," and being both young and ambitious, we continued the fruitless chase longer than we ought. It was growing late, indeed the sun was not more than an hour high, when I decided to give it up and return.

We were then not more than two miles distant from the reef, which makes off from

the lee-side of the island. A few canoes were out, but they were not near us, having gone to leeward towards the ship, which had drifted with the current since taking the mate's whale alongside, so that she was now further from the land than when we left her. I estimated her to be quite six miles from us, and, on sweeping the horizon with my glass, could see nothing of the second mate.

I gave the order to cease pulling and step the mast, in order to set the sail. As I did so, I noticed quick glances interchanged between the three men in the forward part of the boat, and heard a few words in a slang which I did not understand. I was in the act of lifting the mast to launch it forward to McSweeney, when with two strides, he made his way aft, and stood over me with the gleaming boat-knife in his hand.

"Put down the mast!" said he, enforcing the order with a flourish of the knife.

Taken entirely by surprise, and at disadvantage, I was powerless to defend myself. I glanced at the others. Atkins and Jones, his two satellites, had also drawn their knives to support him; the boy Tom was of little account either way. Philippe, the little Frenchman, rose to interfere in my behalf, but was felled like an ox by a swinging blow from the boat-bucket in Jones's hand.

"Give me the steering-oar, and sit down!" said McSweeney, "unless you choose to keep her going to windward. If ye do, we'll pull her and ye may shiteer."

"What do you intend to do?" I demanded. "Where do you wish to go?"

"We're going ashore, here—we three—Jack Jones, Atkins and myself. The rest can do as yez like, after we've landed. We don't want to commit any murder, but ashore we're going, so yez can go with us—or go overboard."

"I'll go with you," spoke up the boy Tom.

I saw that I was helpless in the hands of this gang of ruffians. Poor little Phil, with his head bleeding severely, still lay half insensible where he had fallen.

"All right!" said I. "Put up your knives, and let me up. If you must go ashore, the sooner we get there the better. So I'll steer, and you can all pull."

They seemed relieved at my decision; for neither of them, as I think, had any personal enmity against me, but were determined to desert from the ship at any cost. They took their places at the oars, and plied them vigorously, but still kept a vigilant watch upon

me, with their weapons conveniently at hand.

I steered directly for the place which I judged to be the entrance of the lagoon, for I hoped to get rid of them and return to the ship that night, even if I did so with no help but that of the Frenchman. I confess it was very humiliating to think of making my report to the old man, that I had been overpowered by my own boat's crew.

But it was nearly dark when we reached the landing-place inside the lagoon, and the clouds showed every indication of a wet, squally night. We were surrounded at once by a yelling crowd of savages, who seized our boat and dragged her up high and dry. They did not seem in a hurry to permit me to leave them, even had I thought it prudent. And I did not fail to consider that if I ran down to leeward, and missed the ship in the darkness, I should find it an impossible task to get back again with only one man to help me, and he with his head broken. So I determined to pass one night, at least, on shore.

The king of Arorai, savage though he was, treated us well, and assigned us lodgings, as soon as we ceased to talk of leaving the beach that night.

The three conspirators kept together, and Philippe and myself did the same, while the boy Tom was taken in charge by an old woman, who, I should judge, was the king's mother, or queen dowager. The king, noticing that I was very solicitous about the safety of my boat, gave me to understand that he would be responsible for her. Nevertheless, on going down the coral slope early in the morning, I found her whole broadside stove in. There was no escape for me unless they chose to carry me off in one of their own canoes, which was not likely.

But at daylight, no ship was to be seen in the horizon. I thought of the strength of the current, which, among this group of islands, runs, at times, like a mill-sludge. If the ship had drifted out of sight, it might be weeks before she could make the land again by a circuitous route. I confess the prospect was anything but a pleasant one to me.

McSweeney and his two cronies at once made themselves at home among these people, and each set himself to work to get the king's ear, and acquire influence; so as to have the advantage of the others. For there is very little honor among thieves, according to my experience and observation, and it is wonderful how quickly a white man—at least, a *bad* white man—acquires power among bar-

barians. Before we had been a week on shore Jones was impaled by a spear in the hands of the king, who had been incited thereto, as I knew well enough, by his two rivals.

As the Frenchman and I had but little to do with them, they did not plot against us, knowing that we would leave the island at the first chance that offered. But day after day went by and no sail appeared in sight. This life was monotonous enough, to say nothing of a constant feeling of uneasiness, akin to fear, as we felt that our lives were at the mercy of villanous plots and savage caprices.

As soon as they had got rid of Jones, McSweeney and Atkins began to plot and counterplot. And each feeling that his hour might come at any moment from the schemes of the other, they found it necessary, as desperadoes in such situations always do, to take the law into their own hands and protect themselves.

I was lying in the hut one sultry afternoon trying to kill time as best I might, when I heard a confused noise and shouting, and, stepping forth, beheld these two ruffians, naked to the waist, engaged in mortal combat with their knives. I cannot give you the details of the dreadful struggle; it makes me shudder now at the recollection. The arch-mutineer was stabbed to the heart, and the fight was, of course, ended. But Atkins did not live long enough to secure the fruits of his victory, though the king made much of him for his valor, as he would have done by the other, had the fortune of the day been reversed. His wounds were severe, and for want of surgical knowledge and care he died in a few days.

I breathed more freely after these scoundrels were all disposed of; and, pursuing the same quiet course as heretofore, Philippe and I managed to keep on good terms with all those in authority. I saw very little of the boy, for the old woman guarded him with the most jealous care.

We had been about six weeks on the island, and were falling into savage ways, and becoming truly "Romans in Rome." We always kept a lookout for vessels, shinning up one or the other of the tall cocoa-palms at least half a dozen times a day, but nothing had been discovered.

We went out one night in the canoe to torch flying-fish, as we had several times done before—old Tubokee, our "landlord," the Frenchman and myself. No objection

was raised to our going on these cruises, for there was no fear of our escaping in the night; at least so the king thought.

There were a dozen or more canoes out that night, but they took up their stations at a considerable distance apart, in a line along the coral barrier, as is their custom. The large triangular sails of matting are spread, and the flying-fish, attracted by the glare of torches, rush for it in swarms, or, perhaps more correctly, *flocks*, and, arrested in their headlong course by the sail, drop into the canoe. We continued our sport until a late hour, when having used up our torches, we prepared to return to the shore, nearly all the others having started in advance of us.

Suddenly Philippe touched my arm, and pointed seaward without speaking. A light was visible, at first faint, then flashing up brightly, it revealed the foremast of a ship, with the rigging distinctly traced, and the shape of the foresail. She was not far from us, but, owing to the glare of our own torch-lights, had not, until now, been seen.

"A whaler, boiling!" said I. "Phil, we must mutiny, and serve old Tubokee as those ruffians served us. He may go with us—or go overboard."

The old man remonstrated hard, for he was a chief of rank, and felt that he should be in bad odor with his king and countrymen, if he suffered us to get away without ransom. But there was no help at hand, and Phil and I had matters all our own way. We seized him without ceremony, and were in the act of hoisting him over the side of the canoe, when he yielded to necessity, and seizing a paddle, signified his readiness to follow us.

In less than an hour we were alongside the ship, which, as we had already conjectured, was no other than the *Antelope*. She had run south into the variable winds, and then worked to the eastward, making a large circuit as the only way of getting up to the island again. The captain had almost given us up for lost, but, of course, determined to seek here for us, as there was a possibility of our having gone on shore.

The next day we opened negotiations to recover the boy Tom. The king, as well as the old dowager, was disappointed in not securing a heavy ransom, as he had hoped and expected; but, as we held the old chief Tubokee as a hostage, it was simply a fair exchange, though we did not fail to throw in a few presents, as a return for his kind treatment of us when we were wholly in his power.

SAVED BY A GHOST.

BY FRED STINSON.

"You'RE just in time, captain; what'll you take?"

"Nothing, thank you," was the answer; and Captain Charles Merwin passed quietly through the noisy bar of the Royal Hotel, Dale Street, Liverpool, into the reading-room, and there settled himself, to peruse his wife's last letter a second time, and enjoy his after-tea cigar before a blazing soft coal fire in an open grate.

After he had disappeared from view of those who were imbibing, the question was asked by one, "Does Merwin ever drink?" And promptly answered by another, "No, he has been a teetotaler ever since he was married."

Here one of the party remarked, "He was a hard nut once, though. He was raised under 'Waterman's Pet,' and after the 'Pet' died, he was called the hardest case afloat."

"How did he come to reform?" asked one of the company.

"It is quite a story," said the captain, who seemed to know all about the subject of their conversation; "something about a vision or a ghost; but if you want to hear it, gentlemen, we'll adjourn into the reading-room, where he is alone, and ask him to spin us the yarn. I've heard it, and I know he'll be willing to relate it to you."

To this the whole company agreed; so one by one they dropped into the reading-room, and coming to, as they termed it, around the fireplace, they asked Captain Merwin to relate to them how he became a temperance man.

"Well, gentlemen," said he, "the story is, in fact, the story of a large portion of my life; and I am afraid it is so long that it will tire you."

"Not a bit of it. Go on!" was the general cry.

"Well, then, I will relate to you how I got a wife, became a temperance man, and took command of a ship, all at the same time. Do any of you believe in ghosts?"

To this question there were various answers.

"The reason I ask," continued the captain, "is because a ghost or apparition was

the principal cause of my sudden reformation. Seventeen years ago I was homeward bound from the East Indies in the old ship *Revere*, of Boston, since lost. We had for mate 'Brick Brakem,' and for third mate a stanch chum and friend of mine, William P. McLellan; the captain and second officer's names I forget. I was just eighteen years old, and had shipped as an A.B. (Able Seaman). I had been with Brakem for three years, and a harder or a better master no one ever had. My father shipped me with him purposely, to sicken me of a sailor's life, but, contrary to his expectation, I liked it so well that I never went near home for seven years. Brakem—you have all heard of him, 'Waterman's Pet'—used me pretty rough at first; but I, being of a good constitution, and able to stand it, he soon tired of abusing me, and I being quick to learn, he took enough interest in my welfare to try and make me as good a sailor as himself—if such a thing were possible—and also to make me as hard a case, which was quite impossible. Thanks to his tuition, at eighteen I was a thorough sailor, and a thorough drunkard.

"On this voyage we had before the mast an unusually hard crowd, all of them, except myself, being taken out of jail and put on board the ship in irons.

"McLellan, the third mate, was confined to his room sick with chronic diarrhœa, and in my watch below I used to bunk on his chest and attend to him.

"When we first got out, beating down the Gulf of Martaban, things worked pretty hard. There was even more than the usual amount of bruising, and 'Waterman's Pet' had his hands full.

"About four weeks after we left Rangoon, Billy—that is, McLellan—was taken with convulsions and died. I was just writing a letter for him—he didn't expect to live—when the spasms seized him, and he died in my arms. This was in the morning. At eight bells in the afternoon we buried him.

"That night there was a grand powwow held in the forecastle. Tom Leach—a well-

educated man, and, of course, a sea lawyer—was spokesman. The gist of the matter was this: the ship was rice laden, and leaking badly, short-handed and poorly provisioned, and everybody was discontented. Leach reviewed all this in his speech, and wound up with the remark, 'One of them is settled for, and if the old man don't put in somewhere soon, we can settle the rest; and as I can navigate, we can get along well enough without them.' As he finished, it flashed like lightning through my brain that my friend had met with foul play; but I had no time to think of it, for at that moment I was called aft. Obeying the summons, I was shown into the captain's private cabin.

"Your name is Merwin, I believe?" said the old man.

"Yes sir," I replied.

"Mr. Brakem has recommended you to me for the position made vacant by the death of Mr. McLellan. Do you think you can fill it?"

"Yes sir."

"Then go and bring your things aft, at once." And thus ended my interview with the captain, and I became third mate of the good ship *Revere*.

"It was with some pride and considerable foreboding that I walked forward out of the cabin. I didn't know how they would take my promotion in the fore-castle, but I made up my mind to go any length before I'd let them back me down; and I knew if it came to any serious trouble on account of my elevation, I had a good backer in Brakem.

"When I got inside the fore-castle, as I expected, I was asked what I was called aft for. I told them, very briefly.

"Are you going to take it?" demanded Leach.

"I answered him that I was.

"Are you going to stick by us, or are you going to turn coat and give us away?"

"I am going to stick by the end of the ship I belong to," I replied.

"Are you?" said the bully. "Well, you will get stuck before you ever get to that end, you miserable sneak! Look here, Chuck Merwin" (Chuck was my nickname), "when you step over this fore-castle door to go aft"—here he drew his knife—"I'll put this knife into your carcass, and commence the work of breaking up this cursed tyranny by killing you!"

"I had not time to reply, nor had Leach time to do anything, before the fore-castle door was burst open, and he was dragged on deck. I was out in a second after him, and part of the watch followed me. Brakem had him by the throat, and after striking him several times, he flung him insensible on the deck; then turning to a couple of the men, he told them to bring my duds aft, and to obey me as being third officer; then he added:

"After you have done that, fling a bucket of water over that preacher, and bring him to; and you, Mr. Merwin, come aft, and commence your duties at once."

"This inaugural celebration on my promotion to the quarter-deck passed off without any further disturbance, and matters went along very smoothly until off the Cape of Good Hope. One day all hands aft were suddenly taken sick with a terrible nausea and vomiting, which was unaccountable. The cook was called up and closely questioned, but as he was sick, too, we could not derive much information from him. However, everybody recovered, and things went along their usual course. When off St. Helena, everybody aft was taken sick again, except myself, and with exactly the same symptoms, only much more violent. This confirmed the suspicion that some of our food for dinner had been poisoned, and as I was exempt from this last dose, of course the poisoned article must be one of which I had not eaten; and the only thing I had not partaken of was the pea soup; so the remainder of the pea soup—which fortunately had not been thrown away—was called up for examination. Our captain was something of a chemist, and soon discovered arsenic in the soup. This led to further investigation, and the captain's analysis was proved correct, by our finding one of the tins of arsenic (which was kept in the paint-locker, and had never been opened) with a slit in the bottom of it, made by a sheath knife. The whole mystery of our sickness was now explained. Some one or more of the crew had got the arsenic, and had attempted to poison everybody aft, so as to have the ship put into some port in want of officers. As the two attempts were made—the first, when in the longitude of Cape Town, and the second, just before getting up to the latitude of St. Helena, it looked as if some good calculator and navigator

was at the bottom of it; so we hit upon Mr. Gentleman Leach—as we had nicknamed him—as being the criminal, but we could not prove anything against him.

“This positive proof that we had been poisoned set me to thinking, and after a careful review and consideration of everything, I came to the conclusion that my friend Billy McLellan had been poisoned, and by this man Leach. In the first place, you see he died in convulsions a short time after eating some gruel. Secondly, Leach was his bitter enemy, he having whipped Leach unmercifully once when ashore, some time previous to this voyage of which I am speaking. And then again, thirdly, his words the night after McLellan’s death. I put all these things together, and made up my mind that *he was the man*, and that night fell asleep with that thought in my head.

“I must have slept very sound, for three hours or a little over, when I suddenly awoke with a feeling as if some one was near me. My room was in the after part of the forward house, and had been fitted up very tastily by its former occupant. Across the bunk there were curtains hung, and directly opposite the bunk was my chest, which, with the exception of a desk fastened by screws into the bulkhead, was the only furniture the crib possessed. As I said, when I awoke, I felt the indefinable feeling of a something near me; but opening my eyes wide, I could see nothing in the bunk. I then looked out the window, which was open, but could see no living thing on deck; then I settled myself down to sleep, but I couldn’t get a wink. I still had that horrible feeling, a mysterious presence clinging to me. Unable to lie still with its oppressive sense, I started to get up, and drawing aside the curtains, which had been closed, I shoved one leg over the edge of the bunk; but there I stopped. Sitting on the chest in front of me was Billy McLellan. It did not frighten me, but I was considerably astonished. There he sat, as natural as in life, with his usual dress on, and the right sleeve of his shirt rolled up above the elbow. His eyes were cast down, and he was occupied with his pocket-knife cutting a notch in the lid of my chest. I was so astonished that I was not sure whether I was asleep or awake; but after pinching myself several times, I concluded that I was in full and perfect

possession of my senses. I then tried to speak, and asked, ‘Is that you, Billy?’ As soon as I had spoken the apparition looked up and full at me with a smiling face. This gave me more courage, and after a moment, I asked, ‘What do you want, Billy?’ At this question the smile on the face of the apparition changed to a scowl, such as I had often seen on it in life when something had displeased him. Slowly closing the knife and putting it in his pocket, he arose to his full height, and pointing his bared right arm to the door, he walked through it, and disappeared in the darkness. In a second I was out, and had my slippers and cap on, all that was necessary to dress me; but before I reached the deck I heard a scuffle, and the cry of murder. I grabbed an iron heaver, and was soon in the muss, which was at the wheel.

“I saw at a glance, by the imperfect light of the binnacle lamp, that the second mate was engaged with Leach, who had been at the wheel, and that he was getting the worst of it. I seized hold of Leach, who was on top—both of them were down—and as I did so, I saw that he had stabbed the second mate, and was just drawing the knife out. The instant I became aware of this, I struck him on the head with the heaver and knocked him senseless. All this didn’t take more than five seconds, and by that time Brakem was round, tending to the second mate, and the captain had the wheel. On examining the second mate’s wounds, we found them to be slight; one through the fleshy part of the arm, and one on the cheek. There was no explanation asked as to the cause of the quarrel, such things being too frequent to call for much talk. Mr. Gentleman Leach had fared worse than his victim. For two weeks he never left his bunk, and when he did, he was a dumb man. He was so enraged at not receiving any assistance from the rest of the crew, that he never spoke to one of them for the remainder of the passage.

“Six times after this did the apparition of William Perry McLellan appear to me, and by exactly the same actions warn me of trouble on deck. This got to be so noticeable that Brakem once asked me if I ever slept, or if the devil always told me when there was going to be a row. At his questions I only laughed, and I kept the secret of my ghostly visitor. This I know, when we arrived at Hamburg, and I left

the ship, there were seven distinct notches cut in the lid of my chest, and I was a firm believer in ghosts.

"Brakem also left the ship in Hamburg, and joined the 'Wild Hunter,' bound to Shields, and from there home. Poor devil! he froze to death in her rigging, somewhere in Cape Cod Bay. Refused to go in the boat because she was too full, or something of that sort. He was a 'hard case,' but a good sailor."

Here Captain Merwin paused, and appeared lost in deep reflection, until aroused by one of the company saying:

"After Brakem you ranked next, didn't you, captain?"

"Yes, after he died, for a long time, I was considered one of the hardest officers going; but I never was a patch to him. However, as he has nothing more to do with my story, I'll drop him.

"Well, as I was telling you, I left the old Revere, and I kicked around everywhere for about ten years, going home but once during that period. All this time I had not once seen the apparition of McLellan.

"At last, one fine morning, I found myself ashore in Bombay, out of employ, and a very few rupees in my pocket for ballast. I had been discharged from the ship I was mate of for drunkenness; and it wasn't the first time I had been served the same way. During the time I was ashore, I stayed at a hotel kept by an Irishman named Tracey. He had a daughter, an only child, who superintended the business, for his wife was dead. I need not describe her, because most of you have seen Mrs. Merwin. Well, during the time I was out of a ship I kept pretty straight, and fell in love with Mary Tracey; and I flattered myself that she reciprocated my affection. I was a pretty bold lover, and after a couple of weeks' wooing, I proposed, and was—rejected. She didn't deny but that she loved me; but knowing my failing, she rightly felt that she couldn't trust her happiness in my hands.

"It seems—as I was told afterwards, for I never remembered anything when I was drunk—that I had been in the place in a beastly state of intoxication several times, and she had of course seen me.

"Well, I made all sorts of promises; I swore I would never drink another drop, and all that sort of thing; and I was so

persevering in my entreaties, that at last I was put on probation. She promised to marry me if I would prove to her the sincerity of my good resolutions by touching no kind of intoxicating liquor for a year. I promised readily, and I kept my promise for a couple of weeks.

"Just at this time I got a chance as mate of a native vessel, owned by some Chinamen in Maulmein, and commanded by a Spaniard. After being on board several days, the captain came off with a stranger, and called me into his cabin. The stranger was introduced to me as the ship's agent. I had seen the man's face before, but could not tell where. It was an intelligent but evil-looking countenance, made more sinister by the carefully waxed and jet black Mephistophelean mustache and imperial which decorated his face. Liquors were put on the table, the doors were closed, and the business I was wanted for broached. I didn't drink. The captain asked me if I spoke Spanish; I told him that I did not. 'Well, then, we must talk in English,' he said; and he then went on to state what he required of me.

"At this time, in Bombay, there was a great money panic, and all the banks were breaking. Captain Velarde had just collected his freight money—some twenty-seven thousand rupees—and didn't know what to do with it. He did not dare to leave it on shore, or to change it into notes and keep it on his person, for fear of robbery; and as the banks were all shaky, and on the verge of breaking, bills of exchange were worthless. Nor did he want to leave it in his cabin, as he was away ashore the most of the time; so he proposed to me to take care of it for him. I at first demurred, not wishing to undertake such a responsibility. But he argued to me that no one would ever suspect me of having it, and consequently there was less danger of harm befalling it in my possession than in his. At last I consented to take charge of it, and that evening the money was brought off, all in silver rupees, in five large bags, and one small one. That night I slept on my chest, in which I had stored the treasure, and dreamed that the devil was piling bags of silver on my stomach.

"Everything went along smoothly for two or three days, and every time Captain Velarde went on shore he would give me the keys of his private cabin, and tell me to

help myself out of his liquor-case to anything I wanted. But I abstained, until one day I was left all alone, the steward and boy, all the crew that we had—the rest not being shipped—having gone ashore on twenty-four hours' liberty.

"Left to myself I became very lonesome, very blue, and very hot, and in a moment of weakness I thought that a bottle of 'Bass's Pale Ale' would be good company, and act as an antidote to the blues, and cool me off. I only thought twice of it before I got a bottle and drank it. It acted like a charm. My loneliness and the blues disappeared in company, and I didn't mind the heat a bit. In about ten or fifteen minutes I drank another pint, and a dim recollection entered my mind that there was a decanter of brandy somewhere on board. At this moment the captain came off, and I told him I had finished a couple of bottles of his ale. He made no comment on this, but presently called me into his cabin, and invited me to take some brandy with him. Nothing loth, I did so, and after this he jumped into his dingy and went on shore, and I went for the brandy again.

"I don't know how many glasses I drank, but before dark I began to feel drowsy, and I went and laid down on my chest, and fell asleep.

"For full five hours I laid this way. Suddenly I felt as if some one was moving me; then I heard a noise of wood breaking, then I awoke.

"The scene that met my gaze was startling. I was in my bunk, and standing alongside of it was McLellan, as I had last seen him, with his pocket-knife open in his hand and pointing to a man, who, with his back to me, was wrenching open my chest with a hatchet, while Captain Velarde stood in the doorway with a dark lantern. In moving I must have made a noise, for the man at the chest looked up. I recognized him at once—it was 'Gentleman Leach.' In an instant I jumped from my bunk and closed with him. The struggle was very short. I wrested the hatchet from his grasp, and struck him several violent blows on the head; at the same time I felt a sharp pain in my shoulder, then I heard the report of a pistol, and that was the last I knew for several weeks.

"When I returned to consciousness I found that I had lost my hair, for they had

shaved my head, but I had gained in return the thanks of Yung Hai Ian and company—the owners of the vessel—with a little present of two thousand rupees, and the offer of a command in their employ when I was able to get about.

"Then the whole affair was explained to me by Mr. Tracey, in whose hotel I lay sick.

"Captain Velarde, on the night of the attempted robbery, had engaged a room at the hotel, and sent for the so-called agent, who came, and the precious pair were closeted together several hours. What they were doing or talking about nobody knows. When they came down stairs it was after eleven o'clock, and there was nobody up except Mary.

"They settled their bill for the room and their refreshments with her, and then went out. Going after them to lock and bar the door, she found that they had stopped a few feet from it outside, and were conversing angrily in Spanish. She suspected something wrong, and as she understood the language, she listened, and found that Captain Velarde was arguing with the agent against using any violence, and explained to him that there would be no necessity for it, as it would be three or four hours before their victim would awake from the sleep into which he had been thrown by a powerful drug. This was all she heard; but with the quick instinct of a woman, she concluded that I was their victim, as I had informed her—when ashore for a few minutes the day before—of the large amount of money under my care. She did not wait to alarm any one, or call the useless native police, but putting her father's revolver in her pocket, she hurried to the Apollo Bunda,* and there hired a dingy, and put off for the ship to warn me of my danger. She arrived there just in time to save my life. Velarde had stabbed me once, and was raising his knife for a second blow, when she shot him. He didn't die, but recovered, and was sentenced to the chain-gang in Pulo Penang for life.

"He had written to his owners, telling them what he had done for the safe keeping of the money, with the intention of robbing me himself, with the assistance of his confederate, and then lay the blame on thieves. He had watched me some time, and knowing my failing, had shipped me

*Bunda—a wharf or pier, in India.

as being best suited to carry out his rascally design. But, thank Heaven! he was foiled by a determined little woman and the spirit of my friend.

"Leach—for it was he—died in a few hours after my wounding him. He wore a false full beard for a disguise, and as he had a natural one when on board the *Revere* ten years before, his disguise only served to help me remember his face.

"On the floor of my stateroom was found a pocket-knife which I recognized as belonging to McLellan; and when I recovered I saw the eighth notch cut into the lid of my chest. How the knife came there I can never tell, unless Leach had stolen it from McLellan before he—McLellan—died, and dropped it in the struggle that night; but that is not likely. I took command of one of *Yung Hai Ian* and company's ships, and one year afterward married.

"Not until I had fully established my reputation for sobriety did I tell my wife that I had drank liquor on that day; and as she had learned to trust me, it did not cause her much trouble then.

"I have never tasted liquor since, and poor Billy's ghost never appeared to me again. I am positive in my own mind that Leach poisoned him.

"Now, gentlemen, my story's told, you know how I was saved from the gutter, got command of a ship, and gained a wife—all through a ghost."

SAVED BY A RING.

BY FENNO HAYES.

HE had heard the boat's keel grate on the sand half an hour before, and he knew his ship but waited for him in the harbor below to up with her anchor and away, and when before had he been last on board? Standing in the deep embrasure of a window, a glance without now and then showed him the two sailors walking impatiently up and down the beach, but still he lingered, watching a little figure that danced as lightly as if Captain Charley Grayson's ship was just coming into port instead of being just ready to leave it; or as if Captain Grayson were no more to her than any other sailor that came and went from Rockport.

The least bit of a figure it was, with great, deep, baby-blue eyes, a skin white as milk, a mouth like a ripe cherry, and hair, not gold nor flax, but just yellow, with not a straight inch in one of its curling threads. Captain Grayson looked at this pretty creature, and asked himself if it wasn't all a dream that that cherry mouth had kissed him only the night before; that the yellow curls had floated over his shoulder while the baby-blue eyes had looked up in his dark ones, with tears for his going. Why she hadn't missed a dance that evening but never once had danced with him, and as for the air at the north pole, that he had breathed more than once, it wasn't to be compared to the atmosphere that surrounded her for him, though there were smiles enough, and to spare, he thought, for everybody else.

What did it all mean? Was it true, what Basil French said of her, that Genie Lawton was the veriest flirt in Christendom? He couldn't—he wouldn't believe it. Well, the stars were growing pale in the skies, and he must be gone. But he must speak with her first, if he had to interrupt her in the midst of a dance. Did she think he could vow everlasting love to a woman one night, and leave her the next for a voyage half round the world without a word?

Fortune favored him a little, for just then, for the first time since he had entered the ballroom, Genie stood a little apart and alone between the dances. Captain Grayson crossed the room and said, almost imperatively:

"Come out into the garden a minute, Genie. I must be gone in five minutes."

"Indeed, Captain Grayson," she answered,

coldly, "the dew would do neither me nor my dress good, I fancy. Since you are going, good-by." And quick as a flash she slipped a ring from her finger and as she gave him her hand as if in farewell, she left the ring—the ring that had been his token of betrothal—in his hand as she withdrew her own.

Then the music began again. Somebody came up and claimed Genie for the dance, and Captain Grayson found himself out in the garden alone a moment afterwards, without the slightest recollection of coming thither. The ring was still in his hand. Should he cast it away? Somehow he could hardly do it. She had worn it on her little white hand, and he was one that was slow at unloving. And as he held it, feeling more bewildered than angry yet, Basil French, his old friend, came up the walk.

"You here, Charley?" he said. "Why, I thought you out of sight of land by this time. What's up, old fellow?"

"Everything," said Grayson, impulsively, opening his hand and disclosing the ring.

Basil French laid his hand on his friend's shoulder.

"I didn't think you were so hard hit, Charley. She has served you better than most," he added, a little grimly; "I think her jewel-box must be quite well filled."

At that the ring sped out of Captain Grayson's hand with emphasis.

"Good-by, Basil," he said. "My men have waited long enough for this fool's play."

Basil French remained a while longer in the garden after Grayson's departure, pacing up and down the walks with a quick step, and smiling once in a while as if his thoughts were pleasant, and yet the moonlight falling full on his face scarcely showed a pleasant smile. Once he stooped and picked up something and put it in his pocket.

"Who knows but it may save me buying?" he said, in a low undertone. "Two engagement rings exactly alike would be a romantic coincidence, and all women love romance—pretty fools!"

"You've had a merry night of it; haven't you, child?" said Mr. Lawton, as the carriage whirled them homewards at last, just as the gray dawn was peeping over the hills. "I was such an old fool, seeing you so gay, that I

couldn't bear to take you away, and here's daylight close at our heels. Come, your old father is about as good to you as any of those young popinjays could be that were so thick round you to-night—eh, Genie?"

The young girl crept a little nearer her father and laid her cheek fondly against his. How happy he thought she was, his gay, light-hearted Genie! If everybody could be so cared for and protected as was this fair child of his! Ah, but there is no garrison for a woman's heart, no fortress through which the arrow of treachery and deceit may not find its mark.

Virginia Lawton's feet had been much lighter than her heart that night, for she was proud and had plenty of spirit, for all her childish look, and no man should imagine that she wore the willow for him. She had come into the ballroom with a shadow on her bright spirit, it is true, for the parting that was so near; but to be wretched when one loves and is loved again is hardly possible. Youth, and hope, and love build such rainbow bridges across absence. Some caprice had led her to ask of Grayson not to speak of their engagement to her father.

"Wait till you come back, Charley," she said. "You know it is all right, for he likes nobody so well as you. He's such a tease I should have no peace of my life if he knew."

Grayson had told her he should not be able to come early to the hall—he was so busy getting ready to sail; but come he certainly would to dance at least one dance with the "sweetest lass in all the round world," to whisper something besides "good-by" in "the ear that no sea-shell of any shore he ever trod matched."

Perhaps some memory of words like these haunted her brain, for her cheeks were like rose leaves and her mouth smiled as if some one were speaking to her as she stood by a window alone.

It was but for a moment; then some one came up. Of course she had a bright smile for Basil French. Wasn't he Charley's best friend—the man who owed his life to her gallant lover?

He was a handsome, frank, open-hearted looking fellow, you would have said. His forehead was broad and white with brown hair waving back from it, his nose straight and shapely and his mouth smiling. If there was any fault to be found with his face it was with his eyes. Perhaps it was their being so very light that made them seem cold. At any

rate the smile of his lip never crept up to them. Of easy address, notably good-tempered, Basil French was a universal favorite.

"Do try to console me, Miss Lawton," said French. "I'm as much in the dumps about Charley Grayson's going as if I were Laura Rice herself."

It can't be denied that a little sudden pallor came over Genie's cheek at these words, and a strange feeling of constriction seemed around her heart, but she answered lightly:

"And who is Laura Rice? and why should she be disconsolate about Captain Grayson's departure?"

"O, a little girl over to Middleton that he's saying good-by to now, I suppose. Charley always tells me all his love affairs, and as it's 'off with the old love and on with the new' at every port with him, they make quite a list. But there's Davenant, that I've been trying to find all the evening. Excuse me, Miss Lawton;" and he was gone.

Genie felt one minute as if she were ice and the next fire. Basil French had spoken so carelessly and yet so assuredly, and she knew very well that if Charley Grayson had a friend in whom he confided it was Basil French. But yet he could never have spoken of her to him, for French's manner hadn't a shade of meaning in it. She couldn't think he lied, for even if he had the disposition, which had never been attributed to him, where was the motive? Then came little memories that stung like scorpion bites. How often Charley Grayson rode over to Middleton, a town four miles distant, and it was to be remembered that he never spoke of why he went. Laura Rice? Yes, she had heard of a girl by that name there, said to be very beautiful. How willing Grayson was not to speak to her father of their engagement. "His first, his only love," he had called her—"a love in every port," said Basil French. "What does a woman know of men?" she thought bitterly; and then Virginia Lawton, fiery and impulsive, made up her mind that her name at least should be off this gay gallant's list. And all the while these thoughts rankled in her heart she danced and smiled as if she hadn't a care in the world.

Captain Grayson was late, very late—"quite a ride to Middleton," thought Genie, scornfully—but when he did come Genie never gave so much as a look his way, and when he did come up to her but the least toss of a word and her card was full to the very last dance.

This was a bold game Basil French was playing, but he had planned it well. Virginia Lawton was high spirited he knew—it would not take much to rouse her, and at this late moment Grayson would have hardly time for inquiry or explanation, and as for letters hereafter, he would look out for that. For himself, why should Genie suspect him of falsifying his dear friend, Captain Grayson, and least of all would she suspect him of doing it for love of her, to whom he had never seemed much more than politely indifferent.

A nobler, truer heart never beat than Charley Grayson's, or a baser, more treacherous one than that of Basil French. How two such could be friends for years without the true discerning the false is hard to explain.

Some three years before, at some foreign seaboard town, Grayson had rescued French from drowning, he having been seized with cramp while bathing. French was a man who simulated gratitude gracefully, to say the least; and indeed, so long as Grayson did not stand in his way in the slightest, he doubtless liked him as well as he could anybody. The two countrymen became friends at once. French took a cruise up the Mediterranean on the *Ariel*, Grayson's ship, and then the two parted, the one to saunter through Europe at such pace as he liked, the other to "range the seas over." One day, long afterward, French saw the *Ariel* lying amid the crowd of shipping at Liverpool, and wasn't long in overhauling her captain. It chanced that Grayson was going to set sail at once for Rockport, French's very home, and Basil decided to return on the *Ariel* with him.

A few days after their arrival at Rockport, French, strolling about the quiet old town with Grayson, vowed there hadn't so much as a leaf on one of the trees changed since his departure four years before. Down on the wharf the same old weather-beaten men sat on casks and kegs and told the same old stories of pirates, and sharks, and running the blockade; nobody had moved into town or out. If anybody had died it was nobody that Basil missed, for all the old familiar faces and forms moved about the quiet streets, or sat behind the counters of the small, dingy shops. Basil found it unspeakably stupid, but still his accommodating mouth had a ready smile for every one, his smooth tongue spoke as warm words of gladness to be home again to everybody that shook his hands as could be desired. And everybody thought Basil French was such a pleasant young man, while he

walked on repeating to himself that it was "well enough to have the good-will of a dog."

As they turned a corner Mr. Lawton put out his hand, which Basil took with a sudden recantation of his vow that nothing in Rockport had changed, if that was Genie Lawton by her father's side. He had a faint remembrance of a little fair-haired girl, but this—this was a very fairy queen.

While Mr. Lawton was assuring him, in the usual form of an introduction, that this really was his daughter Virginia, Basil French was thinking of several things—first, that circumstances made it very desirable that he should have a wealthy father-in-law, and Mr. Lawton could furnish that desideratum to anybody that married his beautiful daughter; second, that it might be profitable for him to remain longer than he had at first proposed in Rockport; third, that he didn't like the look the young lady gave Grayson; and fourth, that when he had taken his aim everybody must stand out of the range. Perhaps, had French known that Virginia Lawton, from a love of contrast it may be, disliked fair men and considered six feet the proper standard for a gentleman's height, he would have liked still less the look she gave Grayson who was a handsome man, both dark and tall, while French was light and rather short. Mr. Lawton gave both gentlemen a cordial invitation to call upon him and passed on.

"I never saw so pure and innocent a face in my life," said Grayson to French.

"Take care, Charley," laughed Basil. "Report says she's a rare flirt. I believe that's the way always with these women that look like angels."

Basil knew Grayson disliked a flirt above everything, and he thought, at any rate, it would do no harm to throw out this hint in the beginning; Grayson might be frightened off.

But at their very first call at the Lawtons, Basil, who was an adept at reading faces, saw that in a fair field he should stand no chance beside Grayson, and as for the captain himself, it was very evident he thought the prize worth winning. So Basil decided not to show his true colors at all for the present, and at the same time determined to "move heaven and earth" but he would have his will. The father's money and the daughter's beauty were altogether too desirable not to try for.

"Grayson will have to leave soon, and then the game will be in my own hands," he thought. So, apparently indifferent to Genie, he let the matter alone until the very night of

Grayson's departure, when he began his evil work as we have seen. French was acute enough never to lie when the truth would serve, so his occasional falsehoods found ready credence.

Anger and mortified pride swallowed up every other feeling with Captain Grayson as he turned his steps from the garden to the shore. He had never loved a woman before, never had even a passing fancy, and he had disclosed all the passion of his heart to add to the triumphs of this jilting girl. He wondered if many women were such adepts in simulating love.

There was a rough sea running for a day or two after Captain Grayson sailed, but he was more tossed about in mind than in body.

As the first heat of Grayson's anger subsided, the face of Genie Lawton, so innocent in its childlike loveliness, seemed ever before him. What if there were some mistake—some misunderstanding? If he only had had the chance to ask an explanation! But Basil had said he was only one of her numerous victims. He never thought of doubting Basil's word—why should he? But perhaps report had wronged her. So in softer mood he dwelt on this idea until he determined to write and beg some explanation. "I cannot give her up so," said poor Charley, to himself. "Why, it seemed to me I was as sure she loved me as that the stars shone over us when she whispered it." And by the very first chance he sent a letter to Miss Virginia Lawton, enclosed in one to Basil French.

"I dare say you'll think me a fool, Basil," wrote Grayson, "but the truth is I can't give her up easily." Then he recounted the sudden returning to him of his ring, and expressed his hope, his almost conviction, that there was some misunderstanding. "I enclose the letter to you," he said, "because she took a decided fancy to keep our engagement a secret from her father until my return, and I yielded to it because she wished it, though I would much rather not have done so. If Mr. Lawton sees a letter for his daughter with a foreign postmark, it will, of course, excite his curiosity, and I do not wish her to be annoyed, however she may regard me. I know I can rely on you to see it safely delivered."

Basil French took up a habit shortly after Grayson's departure, of lounging in the back room of the post-office about the time of the arrival of the mail, and cultivated the acquaintance of young Lane, the postmaster's son and clerk, in a manner that decidedly

flattered the young man. Careful to keep out of the way, never seeming to take any interest in anybody's affairs in the matter of correspondence, Basil had managed to find out the number of Mr. Lawton's box, and watched with the eyes of a lynx any letters that were deposited in it. Captain Grayson wrote a very bold, peculiar hand, and this, with the foreign postmark, Basil was sure would serve him to detect it, if any letter should come from him. If there did, why then he would secure it in some way that he did not think it necessary to plan until the spur of the moment should aid him. But his watch was a short one, for as we know, unsuspecting Grayson played into his hands in an unexpected manner by the first foreign mail that arrived.

Basil read Grayson's letter to himself with very much the same smile that he had worn in the moonlit garden a few weeks before, then broke the seal of that addressed to Virginia Lawton and perused it, the smile growing more and more into a sneer at every line. "What stuff a man like that will write to a woman," he said, and then, twisting the letter in his white, shapely fingers, he held it over the blaze of a lamp till it turned to ashes.

"Now a line to you, my beloved friend, and I think you will not trouble me with any more letters for Miss Lawton."

He drew his writing-desk toward him, and wrote, in the middle of a long letter:

"And now, Charley, I dare say you've skipped half the preceding, looking for something about Miss Lawton and the way she received your letter. I delivered it into her own hands, hinting that I knew what had passed between you as excuse for its coming through me.

"She took the letter, and tearing it open read it at once in my presence. As she finished, she broke into one of her musical laughs—you know how sweet her laugh is, sometimes—'Dear me,' she said, 'what an absurdly in earnest man your friend is! Only read this, Mr. French.'

"Of course I declined, but how a woman could look a very saint while acting so like a Satan is one of the mysterious dispensations of Providence, I think. But forgive me, Charley, for speaking lightly of what I'm afraid is rather a serious matter with you. I thought it best to tell it to you just as it was. Forget her, old boy; she isn't worth a thought."

"There," said Basil, sealing the letter, "if she should become my wife, why, men have said harder things than that of women and married them afterward. I should tell Captalun

Grayson, and, of course, there would never be any explanation between them. If I don't marry her, it's likely he'll never see her again. And now he's disposed of I think it is about time to be about my own wooing." For French had been too wary to make any move until Grayson had been gone some time.

Meanwhile, poor old Mr. Lawton had been puzzling his brains as to what was the matter with Genie, or whether there was anything the matter with her, or was it all his imagination? It wasn't that she was less gay, rather that she was too much so, seeming restless and uneasy unless her life was a whirl of excitement. Somehow he missed something in her—the old childish way she had of being pleased at nothing, and once or twice she had burst into sudden tears when he had stroked her hair and called her his "yellow-haired lassie"—the very name Grayson had called her more than once. But when her father asked anxiously the cause of her tears, Genie laughed and said she "guessed she cried because she was too happy—people did, sometimes."

Perhaps that was the reason she cried sometimes in the night when the wind raved and tore, and the big waves tumbled in the harbor and broke, booming like guns of distress, on the beach. Why couldn't she forget him—him who had his love in every port? That was the ugly ghost that refused to be laid, but rose and walked before her if ever she had a thought that she might have been hasty. Laura Rice might have been a mistake, but, of course, Basil French knew his friend's character. Then Genie would vow to herself, as she had a hundred times before, never to think of Grayson again.

There were only these two, Genie and her father, for Mrs. Lawton had died early, and everybody in Rockport knew that Genie dearly loved her father whose heart was bound up in her. Basil thought it might be well to have a friend at court, and commenced his wooing by making Genie's father her proxy. Basil's garden and Mr. Lawton's adjoined, and one day Basil came and leaned over the intervening fence while Mr. Lawton was at work among the flower-beds, his favorite occupation.

Basil was very entertaining that morning. He had seen so many beautiful gardens, public and private, abroad, and he described them well and suggested little imitations of some of their beauties that might be made, on a small scale, in Mr. Lawton's premises. Then he remembered that he had somewhere seeds of various foreign plants that would undoubtedly

grow in America. He would hunt them up, and if Mr. Lawton liked, he should be very happy to have him try them. And then he went away, leaving Mr. Lawton thinking what a very pleasant fellow young French was.

The next morning Mr. Lawton was called away on business, and so Genie went out to water the flowers alone. Basil, seeing a movement among the shrubbery, thought at first that it was Mr. Lawton, but coming nearer, the gleam of a light muslin showed him that he had made a mistake; a decidedly pleasant one, he thought, as he stood for a few moments behind the bole of a large tree near the fence watching the fair face that was just then bent above a lily of exquisite beauty.

The morning was a lovely one, and Genie Lawton's was a beauty that seemed in peculiar harmony with blooming flowers and smiling skies. Here, among the blossoms, young and healthful, she had forgotten all save that it was sweet to breathe in so lovely a world; but as she looked up from the lily, the sight of Basil, as he stepped forward, reminded her of that which she was even trying to forget, and the color on her cheek deepened into crimson.

"Good-morning, Miss Lawton," said Basil. "I saw something moving among the trees, and thought it was your father, to whom I promised some seeds yesterday. So I came down with them, but the flutter of your dress told me my mistake before I was half way. They should be sown at once, and as I may not be here for a day or so, I think I will leave them with you for him."

Genie shared her father's enthusiasm about rare plants, and there were questions to be asked and answered, and it is not to be supposed that Basil spared less effort to entertain his companion of to-day than that of yesterday. Yet he was very careful not to have the slightest air of *empressement*. He had determined upon his role for the present—that of the kind, neighborly friend, the man who should show every attainment that he possessed in the best possible light, and command respect, admiration and confidence. He rightly judged that Grayson had been an ardent, passionate wooer—Genie would be apt to recoil from anything of the kind from another. Patience, the ingratiating himself into her father's particular favor, the gradual unfolding of himself from her father's friend to her lover, paved by a watchful but unobtrusive attention to her comfort and wishes, these were the steps Basil had laid out for walking, if not exactly into Genie Lawton's heart, at

least into her acceptance of him as a husband, if her father strongly desired it.

So, cautiously and warily, he followed up the beginning he had made, and every day Mr. Lawton became more convinced that there were very few young fellows like Basil French, so ready to put himself out for anybody, willing to sit and read the paper an hour at a time for an old gentleman whose eyes were failing him.

Then when Mr. Lawton began to suspect that Genie might be the magnet that drew Basil so often to his house the idea was not unpleasing to him. To be sure he had once thought that Captain Grayson and Genie were going to make a match of it, but he had been mistaken. He was getting old, and if he should die Genie would be left all alone in the world. Basil's father had left him a handsome property (of which Basil had left a very large portion in Europe, but Mr. Lawton didn't know that), and in fact Mr. Lawton didn't know of anybody he would sooner trust Genie with than with Basil French.

As for Genie, though she could not help liking Basil for his attention to her father, and being a little touched by his silent devotion to herself, she had made up her mind that there was no such thing for her as loving any man again. She might have many friends, but hers was a nature that admitted of but one love.

But one night there came a sad blow for Genie. Her father had a paralytic shock, and in her distress and alarm Basil appeared so honestly sympathetic, so helpful and strong, that the poor girl really clung to him; for this man could wear the "livery of heaven to serve the devil in" with so consummate a grace that he might have deceived an angel. Basil was sadly tempted to declare himself at this very time, but he never acted from impulse, and he reflected that this might shock Genie. But he was so thoughtful, and tender, and kind—so good to Genie! She could never forget it, she thought.

When Mr. Lawton rallied somewhat from his illness, he appeared much broken and shattered, and a little childish. He manifested a great affection for Basil, and was very anxious about Genie, being constantly tormented by a fear of dying and leaving her alone. "What will she do when I am gone, Basil," he said, one day, "my poor lamb, all alone in the world!"

"My dear sir," said the safely Basil, "would you entrust her happiness to my care

if I could prevail upon her to honor me so?"

"To nobody so quickly," said the old man, pressing Basil's hand in his feeble clasp.

Armed with this "good-speed" Basil sought Genie and urged his suit with the same tenderness that had marked his manner all along.

But Genie would give him no encouragement. "I shall never love any man," she said, vehemently, a fiery blush suffusing her face, "it is impossible—impossible."

Basil received this rather emphatic answer with a sad resignation, only begging of her if ever it was possible for her to give his suit any consideration to remember that he should never withdraw it. And then he troubled her no more, but was the same kind, respectful friend as ever.

But Mr. Lawton was at first disappointed and grieved, and then angry at Genie's refusal of Basil. With the petulance of sickness he reproached Genie for refusing to let her poor father have the comfort of knowing that she was provided with a safe protector before he died. Meanwhile Basil gained more and more influence over the weak old man, and this marriage of Basil and Genie gradually took the form of monomania with him.

He entreated and expostulated with Genie day after day till she was almost wild. Sometimes she would think, "Why not? He has been good to me—he always would be, I suppose. Perhaps I should be as happy as many other women." But she knew very well all the time that she was only trying to make herself willing to become a sacrifice for her father's sake.

One day she went into her father's room and he began, as usual, bemoaning the probability of his soon leaving her alone, and how strange it was that she could not let him die happy, knowing that she was safe with so good a man as Basil French. Genie listened in silence, thinking how little like her old indulgent father was this querulous, complaining invalid, and asking herself why it was that she could not do this thing upon which his heart was so set; and as she thought a tear stole unbidden down her cheek.

Her father saw it. "Virginia Lawton," he said, suddenly, "I believe you are crying after that puppy of a Captain Grayson."

Don't say that blue eyes cannot flash. There was fire in Virginia Lawton's, and her cheeks, brow and bosom flamed a fair crimson as she said, "Father, you cannot despise Captain Grayson more than I do. Moreover, you may tell Basil French, if you like, that if

he still cares for such regards as I can give him he is at liberty to tell me so." It seemed to her at that moment that she would die sooner than live with the possibility existing of ever listening again to such words as those her father had spoken of Captain Grayson.

Now Basil French congratulated himself that the game was won, and he only wished to hasten the wedding, for he was tired of his *goody* part and of dull, stupid Rockport. Genie's money would take them abroad in good style. He didn't flatter himself at all that Genie loved him—indeed, she had honestly told him that she had consented to marry him for her father's sake—but he didn't know but it was almost as well. A woman who loves is always exacting, he thought, and a little apt to be sharp at spying out occasions for jealousy, and, in truth, Basil's words about Captain Grayson, "a love in every port," would apply very well to himself. On the whole, Basil was very well satisfied.

Why is it that so often a criminal, after having laid some admirably and carefully concocted plot and carried it out almost to the end, at the very last does something absurdly rash and foolish? Basil French bethought himself that he must furnish an engagement ring, and then he remembered his little speech to himself in the garden. He unlocked a box and took the ring from it. "It must have cost a pretty sum," he said. "I cannot afford such a one in the present rather reduced state of my funds."

He examined it carefully. There was no mark by which it could be identified, and Basil French decided to give Genie Lawton the ring Captain Grayson had given her.

When he brought it to Genie a sudden pallor came over her face. "Where did you get that ring?" she gasped.

"Are you faint, Genie?" said Basil, anxiously, and with the most innocent air possible.

"No, no," she said, "but where did you get that ring?"

"I ordered it from Tate & Co, New York," he said. "What is there about it that affects you so?"

She looked keenly at him, but his eyes unflinchingly met her own, and there was upon his face only a puzzled, anxious expression. It must be only a cruel coincidence, the similarity of the two rings, but how could she wear it, to be a constant reminder of that which she prayed and strove to forget?

But she must, she thought wearily, for least of all could she bear any questioning that

touched ever so unwittingly upon this subject so painful to her heart. "I am not quite well, to-night I think, Basil," she said, extending her hand for him to place the ring upon it. "I fancied that I had seen a ring like this before. It is very beautiful," forcing herself to look at it and speak naturally.

The moment Basil French had given Virginia Lawton the ring he repented it, and inwardly cursed himself for a fool for doing it. He went home uneasy and ill at ease, and taking up the evening paper the first thing his eyes fell upon was not at all calculated to dispel these feelings. It was the ship list, headed by the arrival in Boston of the *Ariel*, Captain Grayson.

"Hang it," said Basil, "who knows, if I don't go where he is but he'll be coming here, and that won't do just now. No, no, I am so anxious to see my dear friend that I cannot wait a day to join him in Boston. Depend upon it I'll stick closer than a brother to him while he's on shore this time."

When Genie Lawton escaped to her own room, after her trying interview with Basil, she tore the ring from her finger and threw it upon her table. It seemed to burn her hand like a flame. "Will nothing allow me to forget that man?" she said. "I will hide it, lose it, anything rather than wear a perpetual reminder of him."

Then a sense of the strangeness of the two rings being so alike struck her, and she took up the ring and examined it closely. It was a perfect *fac-simile* she thought. She opened a drawer to put it in a box. A small microscope, a favorite toy of hers, caught her eye in the drawer. She remembered that she had looked at the first ring through this, and an impulse rose within her to look at this in the same way. Why, there it was, that very little flaw in the same stone, a flaw too small for the naked eye. She trembled like a leaf, for she knew that she held in her hand, not the *fac-simile* of Grayson's ring, but the ring itself.

At this moment a servant tapped at her door and said that her father was waiting for her to read the evening paper to him. She had no time to think or wonder now. She must go down at once, for her father didn't like waiting for the news.

The ship news was always the first thing that Mr. Lawton desired read, and here again fate thrust memory before her as she read, "Arrived—Boston—ship *Ariel*, Grayson."

Well, she read on, telegraphic, congressional, general news, anything, everything, but it all

might have been so much Greek or Hebrew, so far as the words conveyed any sense to her, for, though her mind was not left free enough to conjecture how the ring came to be the same, she was repeating over and over in her mind, "it is the same."

Before the paper was finished Basil French came in again. "I am called to Boston, suddenly," he said, "and as the train goes early I must say good-by, to-night."

Genie did not follow him to the door to say farewell, as lovers have a fashion of doing when others are by. "Good-by," she said simply, giving him her hand, coldly, he fancied, and as she did so he noticed that the ring was not on it. This worried him a little. "By heaven!" he thought, "what a fool I was to give her that ring! I must have been crazy."

The paper was finished at last, and Genie was at liberty to go back to her room. It seemed to her afterward as if something entirely without and beyond herself controlled her action that night, for she went immediately to her writing-desk, and taking a sheet of paper wrote:

"CAPTAIN GRAYSON:—This ring, once given me by you, Basil French gave me to-day for an engagement ring. How did he come by it? VIRGINIA LAWTON."

In this note she enclosed the ring, and folding it and placing it in an envelop directed it to "Captain Charles Grayson, ship *Ariel*, Boston." Then she went swiftly down the stairs, and found Tom and bade him take it to the post-office that night, so that it might go by the early morning mail.

While doing this Virginia Lawton had scarcely thought at all, only that she must ask of Grayson this question, but when the letter was past recall a dozen tormenting surmisings came to her. Grayson might have sold it to Basil, or to the jewellers. O, why had she not thought of all this before she wrote? And in an agony of pride and remorse the night went by.

Two more congenial friends you would have thought were seldom met together than Basil French and Charley Grayson, as they sat together in a snug room at Grayson's hotel when a servant entered with a letter.

Surely Grayson knew that delicate hand. He opened the letter. What was this?

Basil French, too, saw the ring, and for once his face played him false. The smile and color both forsook his lip and cheek, and Captain Grayson, looking up from the few

words of the letter, read convicted treachery and deceit written in every line of the face of him he had thought his friend.

He strode to French's side and grasped his shoulder with fingers that felt like the grip of steel. "Where did you get this ring?" he said, holding the ring before him. "Did you give Virginia Lawton the letter I sent her?"

French tried to rally, but he did not know how much, or whether any, of his falsehoods Virginia had exposed, and he only managed to say, with rather a poor show of calmness:

"Why, picked it up, to be sure, Charley; you know I never let anything slip through my fingers."

"I wish I had let you slip through my fingers at Leyden," said Grayson, "for I believe you are a treacherous, lying villain."

Grayson was fairly trembling with rage, but he controlled himself with a mighty effort. He opened the door of the room.

"Basil French," he said, "if you do not go out of that door in one instant of your own accord you will be my help. Go," he said, as French hesitated.

He looked at him and went without a word.

In the evening of the most wretched day Virginia Lawton ever spent, a ring at the door was followed by Hattie's announcement to her mistress that a gentleman wished to see her.

Genie went down listlessly. Probably somebody on business, for Genie's father was too feeble to bear much and so the most of the burden fell on her.

She opened the door and looking in walked a step or two forward as if in a dream. Then somebody came up, and taking both her hands turned her full toward the light so that he might look down into her face. "Virginia Lawton," he said, "do you love me?"

She trembled, she blushed, and ended with a shower of tears that Captain Grayson found himself wiping away with kisses a moment afterwards in the most unaccountable manner.

Then it all came out, of course, and as the story of each was told, it would have been quite touching to have heard the soft sigh, "my poor Genie," "my poor Charley," if anybody had been there to hear it.

But "all's well that ends well," and Genie and Captain Grayson soon forgot past sorrow in present joy. As for Basil French, he never troubled his friend Charley Grayson with his presence again, and I think it was quite as well for his dainty body that he didn't, after Grayson knew all.

ROGUE RIVER.

BY ELIJAH CHANEY.

Rogue River rolls on through the wilderness into the great ocean. Its source, first at the grand and beautiful Tri Arch, formed by the Three Brothers which loom high above the Cascade Range, and are covered with perpetual snow, silent sentinels, and of wondrous beauty, grand emblems of purity, mighty mountains of white encircled with green. The clear cold water, in a thousand rivulets, first gently glides from the grand white arch of the Trinity down the Cascade Mountains, then uniting, in its forward course, goes leaping over precipices from forty to one hundred feet in height, forming most beautiful cascades, which are surmounted by magnificent rainbows. And there is heard the grand music of the rushing of many waters—there the silver spangled cascades of Rogue River make sweet music. Thence the river meanders on through a forest of young trees in the solitude of the wilderness, where all is silence save the sound of the clear water dashing on the cold granite; passing by Florence Rock on the one side, which closely resembles a lady's dress from the waist down, while to the south in the distance is seen the blue craggy Siskiyou chain, one of which is crowned by Pilot Knob—a huge boulder, one mile across. Thence the river pursues its devious way over a pumice-stone bed which is nearly as light as cork, and will float when a detached piece is thrown into the water.

On goes the river, passing romantic Table Rock on one side, while on the south there is

a plain which is fifteen miles across. Twenty years ago it was a desert, destitute of vegetation; but for the last few years the soil has been steadily increasing, and at the present time spots of good grazing land exist on it. Most of it is formed in indentations, like a vast multitude of bowls or basins set every two or three rods apart; while in the bottom of all these bowls is a number of boulders, about one third pumice, the rest, hard, polished stones, many of them as round as cannon balls, and generally about six or eight inches in diameter. How they ever came to be in such places, while around on every side is a wall of earth and fine gravel, is a mystery. On the south termination of this plain is a valley which a tourist described as being the most beautiful country that he had ever seen except the Choctaw Nation land. It has been made more attractive since, by orchards and vineyards; even almond and fig-trees bear fruit there, and with a climate like perpetual Indian summer, it is charming.

From here on rolls Rogue River into and through the great forest that stretches from Behring's Strait to Cape Mendocino, and thence into the ever-restless, wide-rolling ocean. And on all the tributaries of this mighty mountain river "China John" still obeys the command of "Tie John," once given to him to "work away!" The cluck of his pick and the grating of his shovel are still heard on all its tributaries, but for two years past white men have nearly ceased mining in the beautiful Illahee.